



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

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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.

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**THE BIG QUESTION:**

**WILL HAMAS WIN?**

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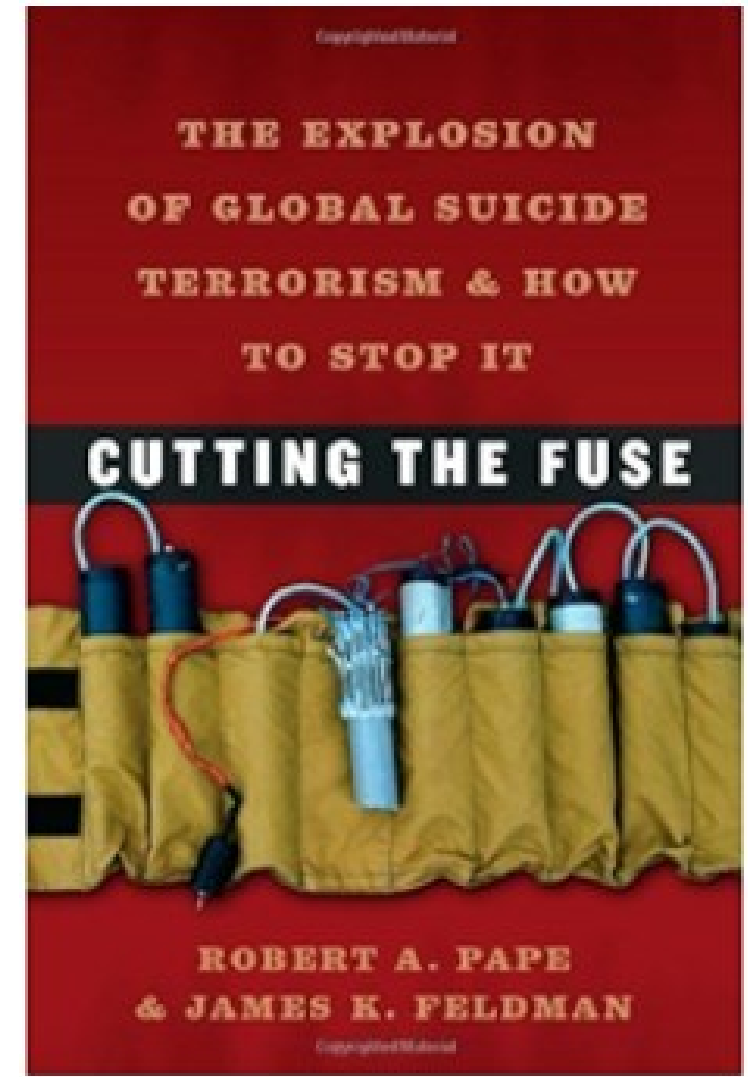
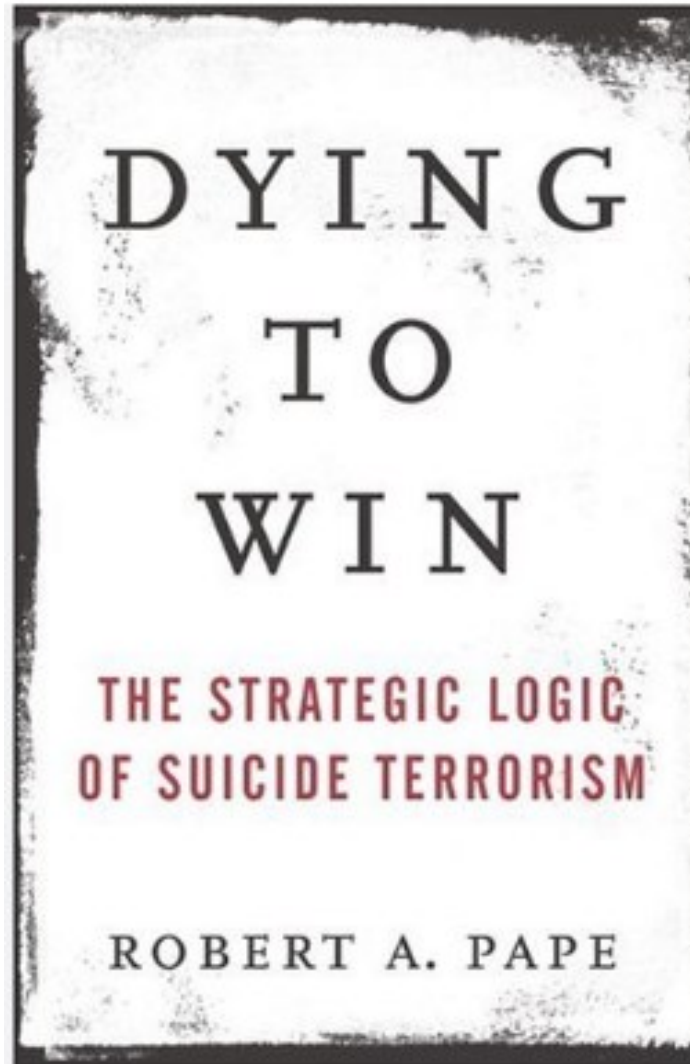
# THE BIG QUESTION: WILL HAMAS WIN?

- 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



Jordan Cancels Biden Meeting; Protests Erupt After Gaza Hospital Bombing - ...

Visit >

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

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## 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

# US RESPONSE: OVER THE HORIZON CARRIER-BASED AIR POWER



USA moves Carrier Strike Group with USS Gerald R Ford to protect Israel, Lebanon...

[Visit](#)

USS Eisenhower carrier strike group also ordered to Eastern Mediterranean.



Particularly important vs Hezbollah



# HAMAS SURPRISE ATTACK IN HISTORIC CONTEXT

	Total Israeli Deaths
▪ 1948 War	6,400
▪ 1973 War	2,600
▪ 2023 Hamas Surprise Attack	> 1,400 (Oct 7-9, 2023)
▪ 1967-70 War of Attrition	1,424
▪ 2 <sup>nd</sup> Intifada, 2000-2005	1,010
▪ 1967 War	900
▪ Lebanon 1982-85	654
▪ Suez 1956	172
▪ Lebanon War 2006	165

# WHY THE “SURPRISE”?

## ACTUALLY, MULTIPLE SURPRISES

## FIRST SURPRISE: MAJOR INTELLIGENCE FAILURE



Gaza-Israel Border Wall Breached Amid Ongoing Conflict

[Visit](#)



Chaos ensues after militants breach a border wall in Gaza

[Visit](#)



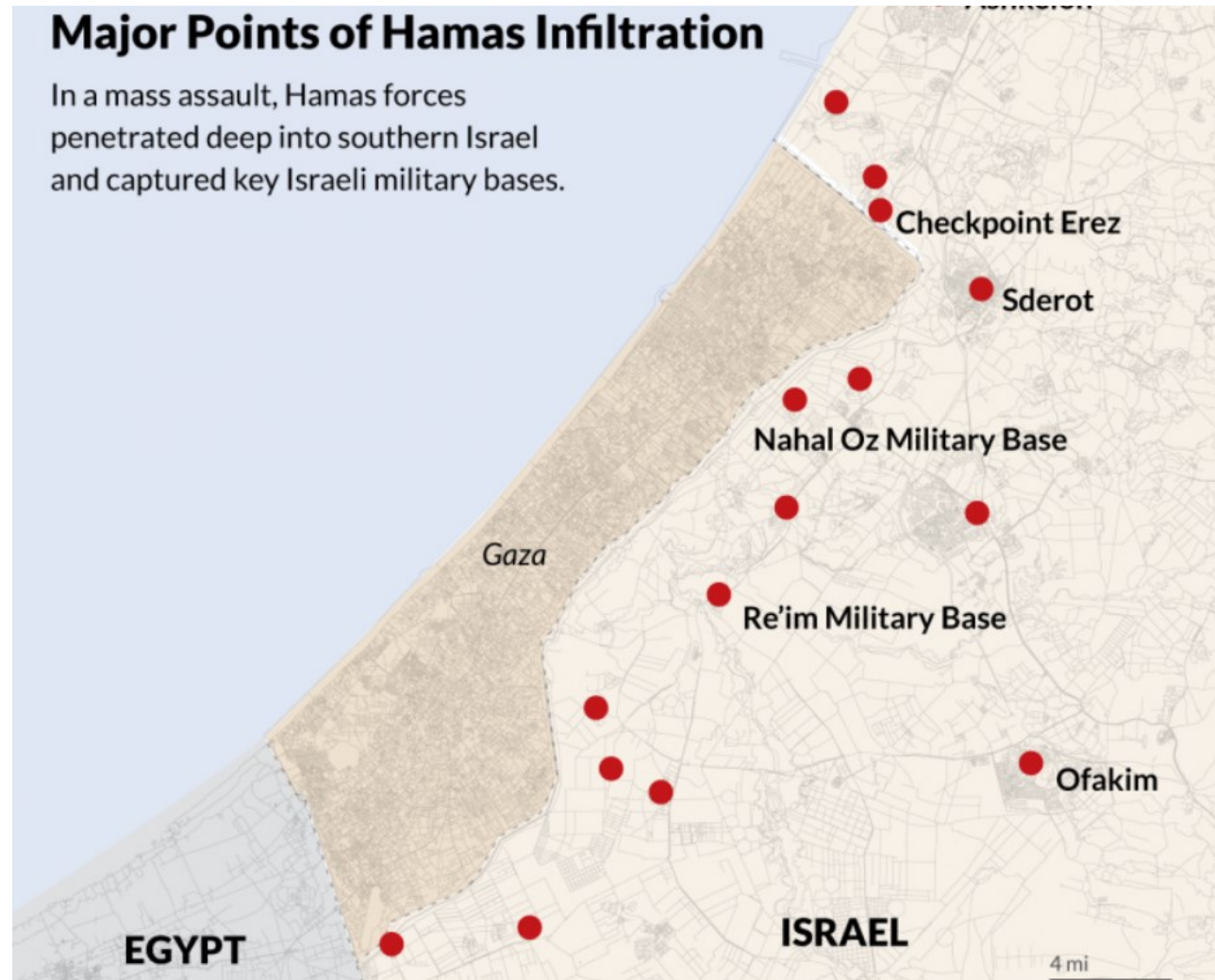
## AFTER BREACH: 1,000 HAMAS FIGHTERS ENTER ISRAEL



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



# MORE INTEL SURPRISES: DETAILED ATTACK PLANS



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

A map recovered from a site in Israel suggests the degree of Hamas planning and intelligence-gathering leading up to Saturday's surprise attack. PHOTO: SOUTH FIRST RESPONDERS



## 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.



## A SCHREENSHOT FORM AL QASSAM WEBSITE

الصفحة الرئيسية :: من نحن :: أقسام الموقع

كتاب الشهيد عز الدين القسام  
EZZEEN ALQASSAM BRIGADES

جديد الفيديو أفلام وثائقية عمليات جهادية قصص مغتصابات لقاءات ومؤتمرات وصايا الشهداء فواصل مرثيات أخرى

العنوان : خطاب قائد هيئة أركان القسام محمد  
الضيف (7 أكتوبر)  
التصنيف : لقاءات ومؤتمرات  
إنتاج : دائرة الإعلام العسكري  
التاريخ : 07-10-2023  
مشاهدة : 16810

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

تحميل

خطاب قائد هيئة أركان القسام محمد الضيف (7 أكتوبر)

الإعلام العسكري

طوفان الأقصى

الإعلام العسكري

## A SCREENSHOT FROM THE TRAINING VIDEO IN PREPARATION FOR THE RECENT ATTACKS

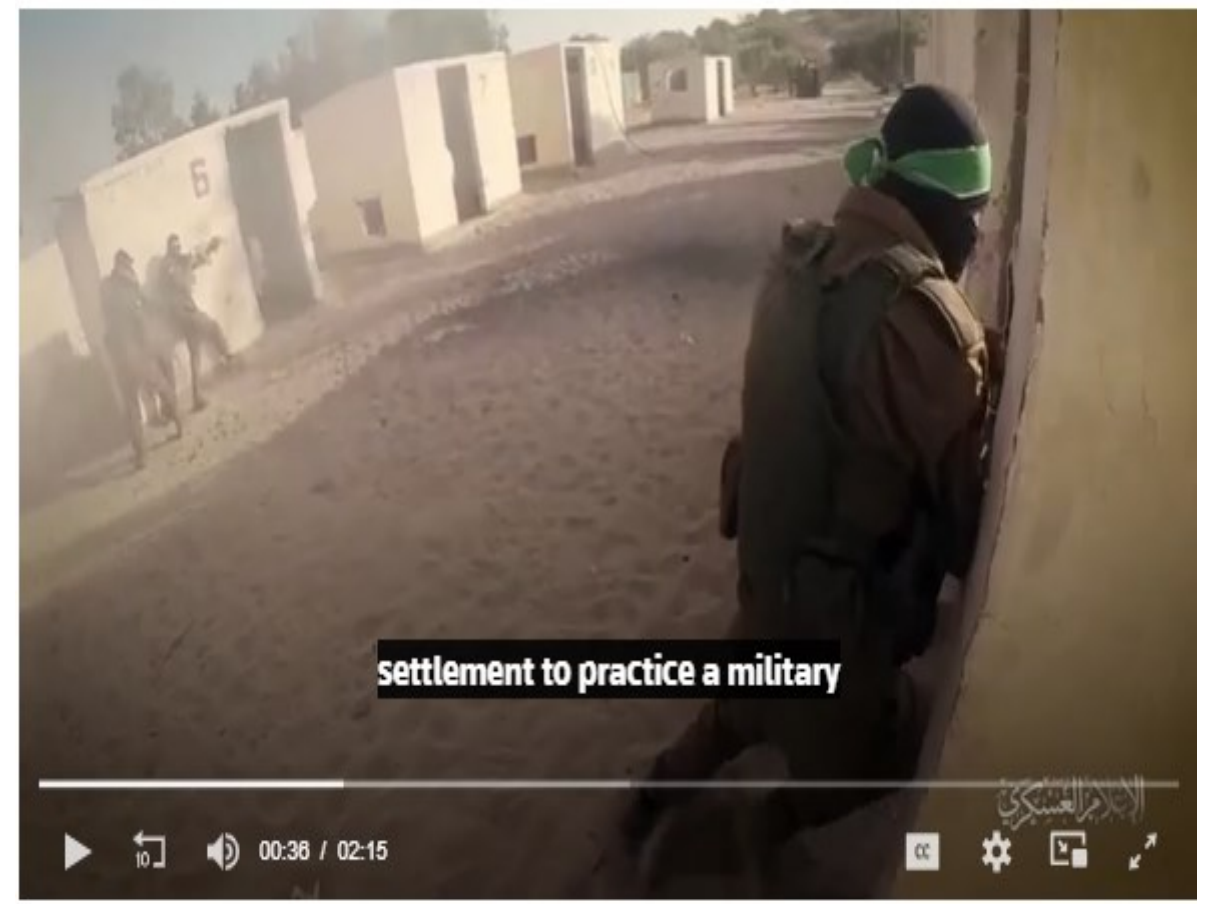




# HAMAS TRAINING IN PLAIN SIGHT FOR ASSAULT IN GAZA SINCE 2021

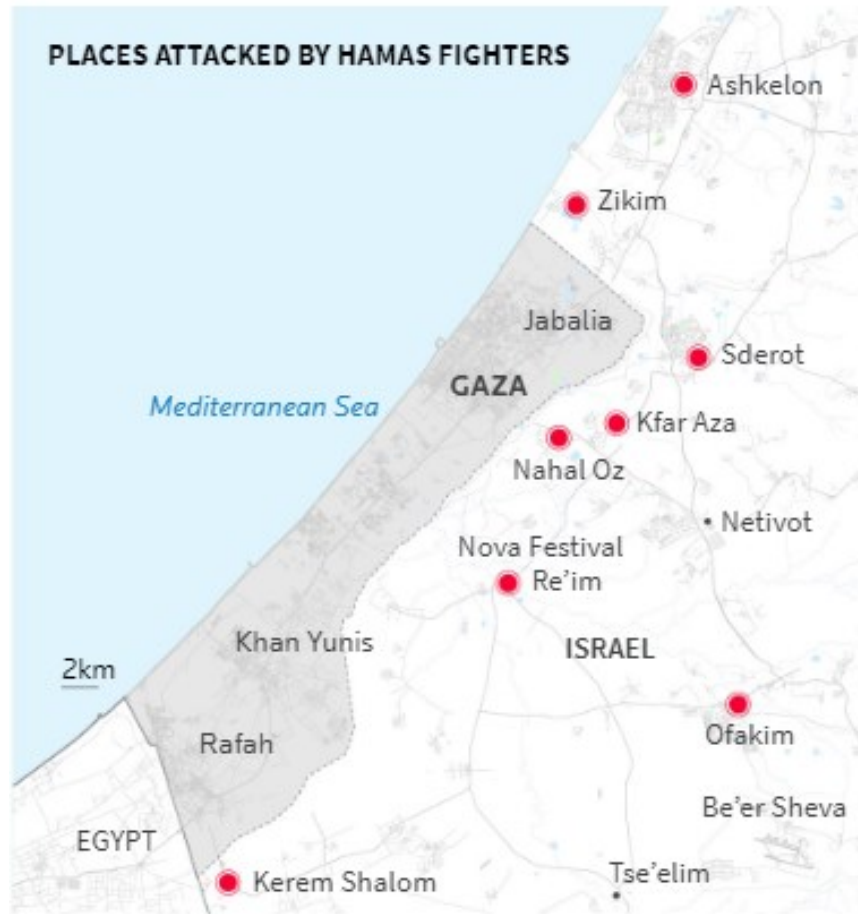


Hamas training with para-guilders



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	West Bank/Gaza
1967:	2.3 million (64%)	1.3 million
<b>2023:</b>	<b>7.2 million (57%)</b>	<b>5.4 million</b>

Gaza population today = 2.2 million

Unemployment = 50%



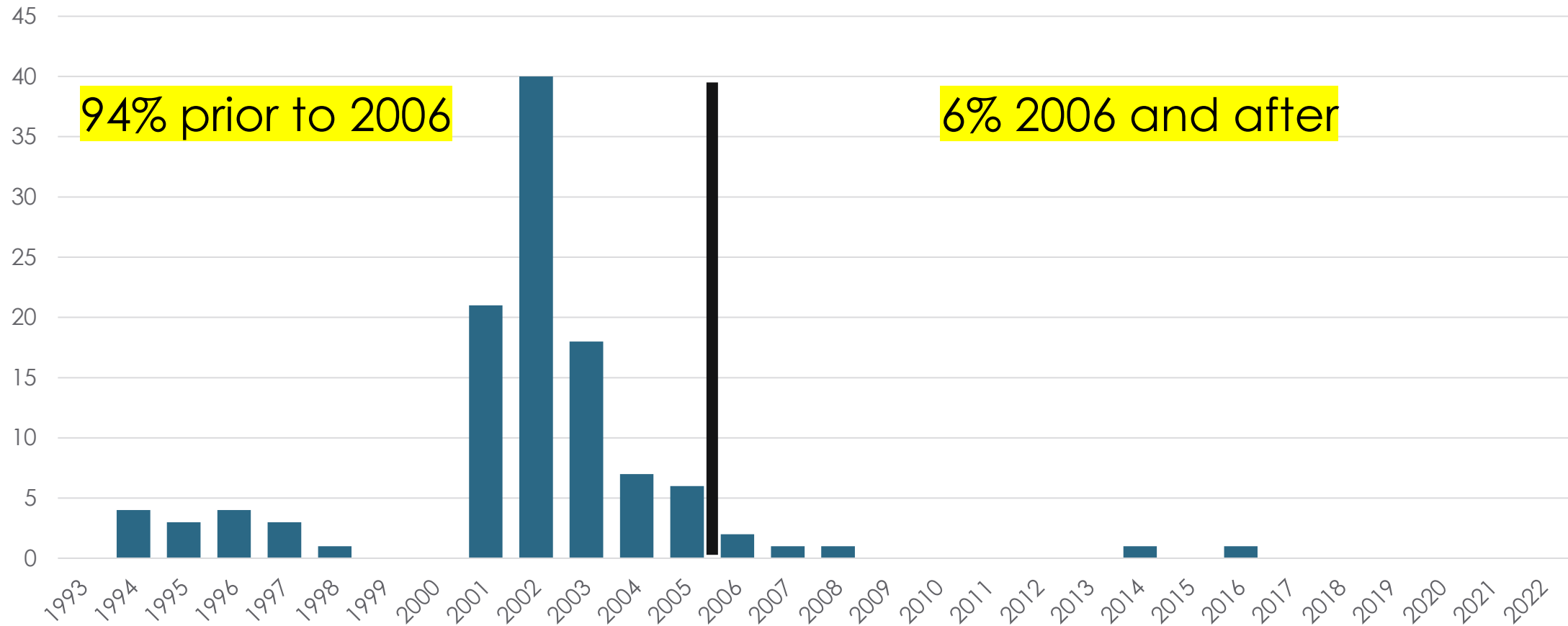
Map of the Overview of the Six Day War (1967)

## Growth in the Jewish Population in the Disputed Territories Explains Trajectory of Israeli-Palestinian Conflict



# SUICIDE ATTACKS IN ISRAEL, 1993-2022

Heavy IDF Presence in West Bank/Gaza until 2006



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

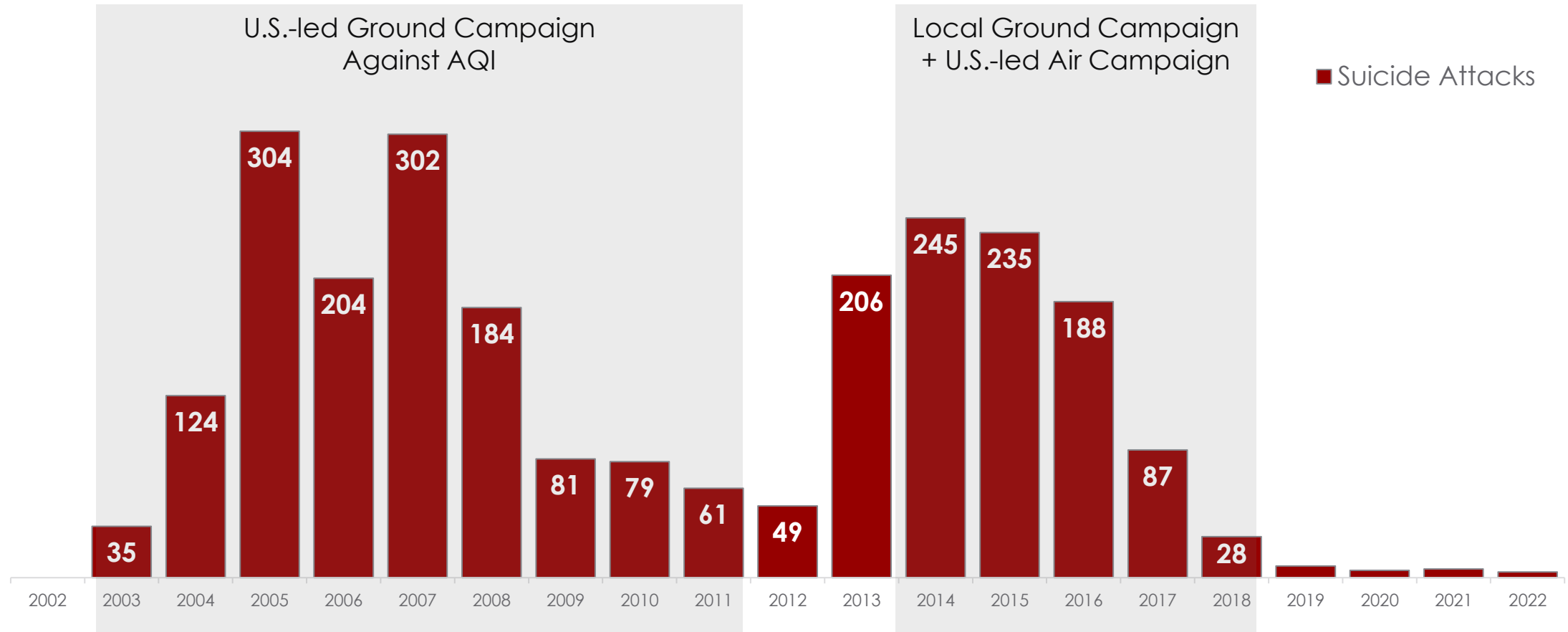


## WHAT CAUSES SUICIDE TERRORISM CAMPAIGNS?

95% of suicide terrorist attacks are in response to the presence of heavy ground forces on territory the terrorists' prize

# MILITARY GROUND PRESSURE AND SUICIDE ATTACK

## Trends in Iraq, 2002-2022

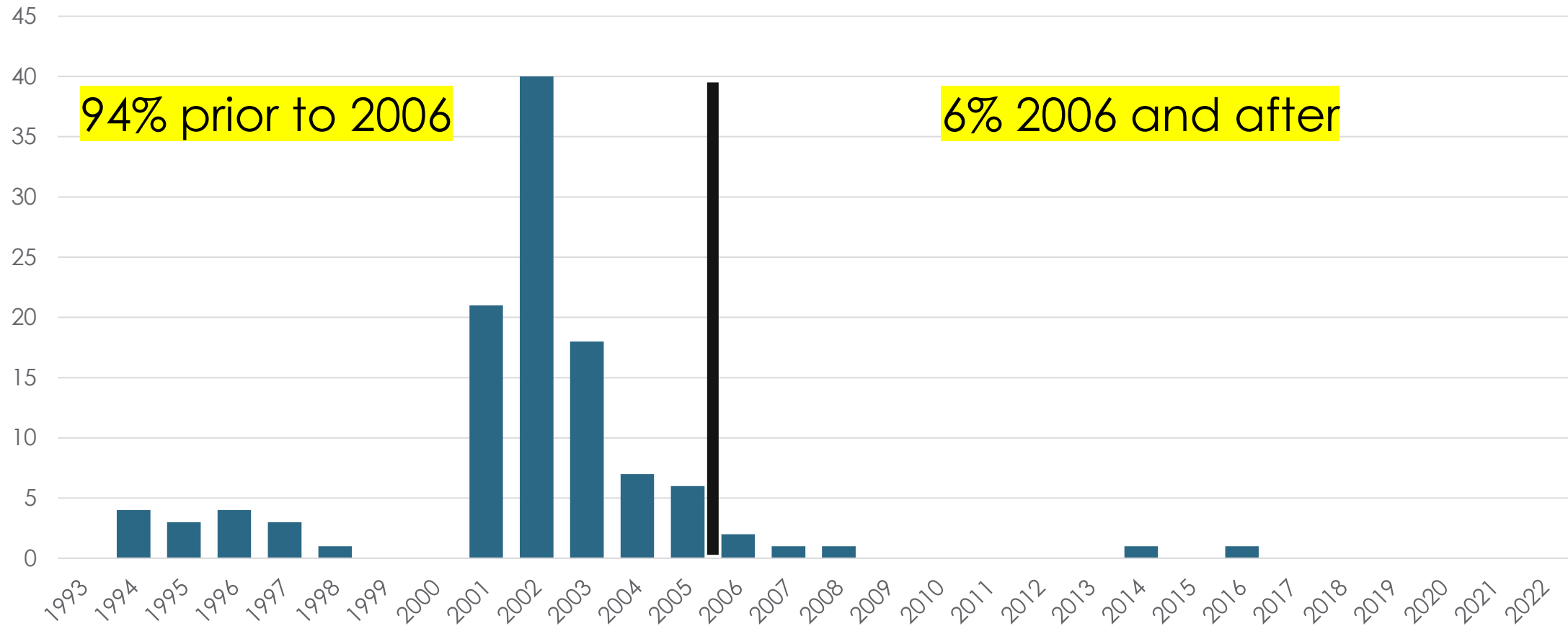


Note: Showing confirmed suicide attacks only. Data current through December 2022.

Source: CPOST Database on Suicide Attacks. U.S. troop data from Michael Allen, Michael Flynn, and Carla Martinez Machain "U.S. Global Military Deployments, 1950 to 2020," Conflict Management and Peace Science (2021).

# SUICIDE ATTACKS IN ISRAEL, 1993-2022

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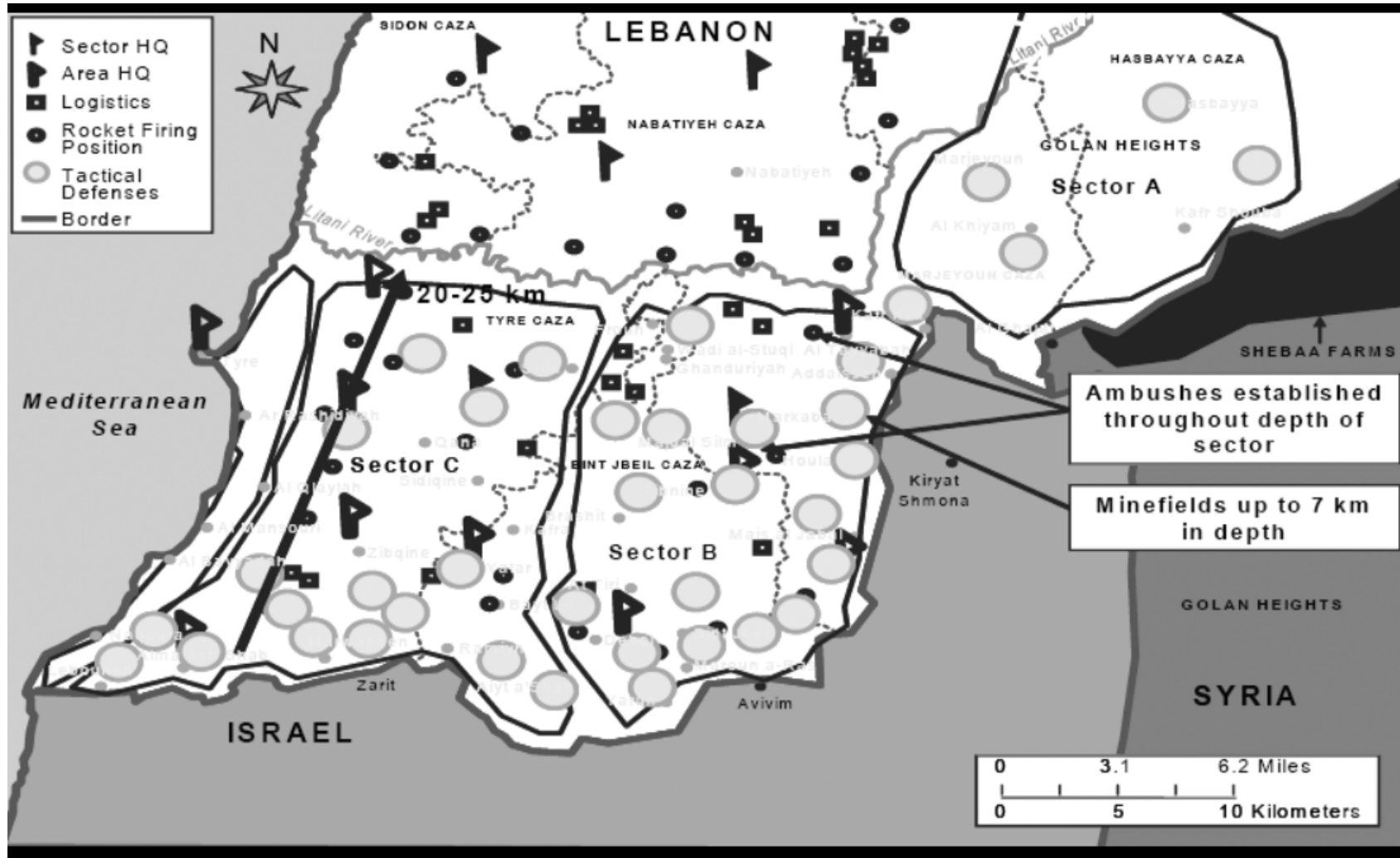
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# RISKS OF ESCALATION IN GAZA

# "Hezbollah Defensive System in Southern Lebanon", 2006

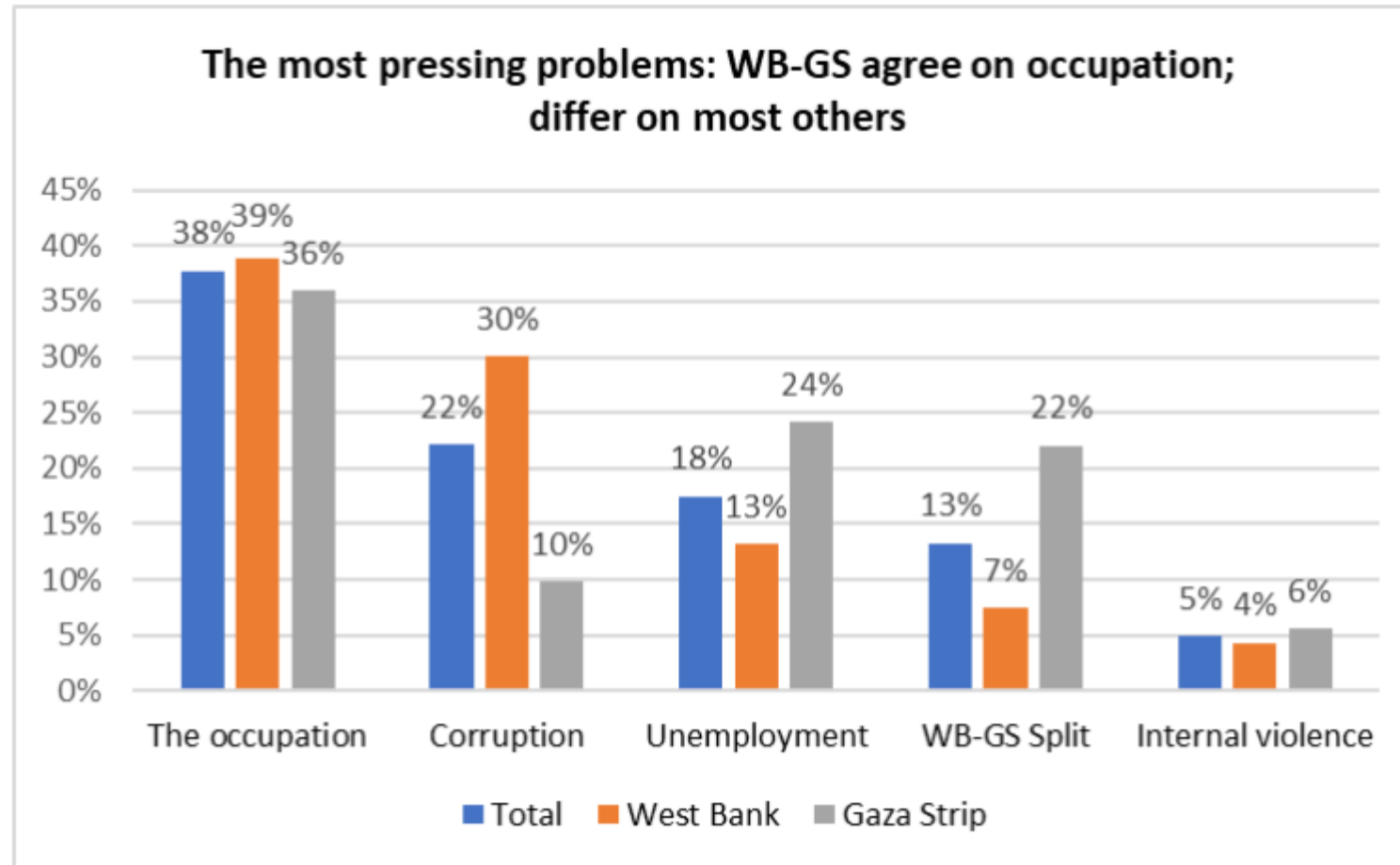


Implication for Gaza:

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

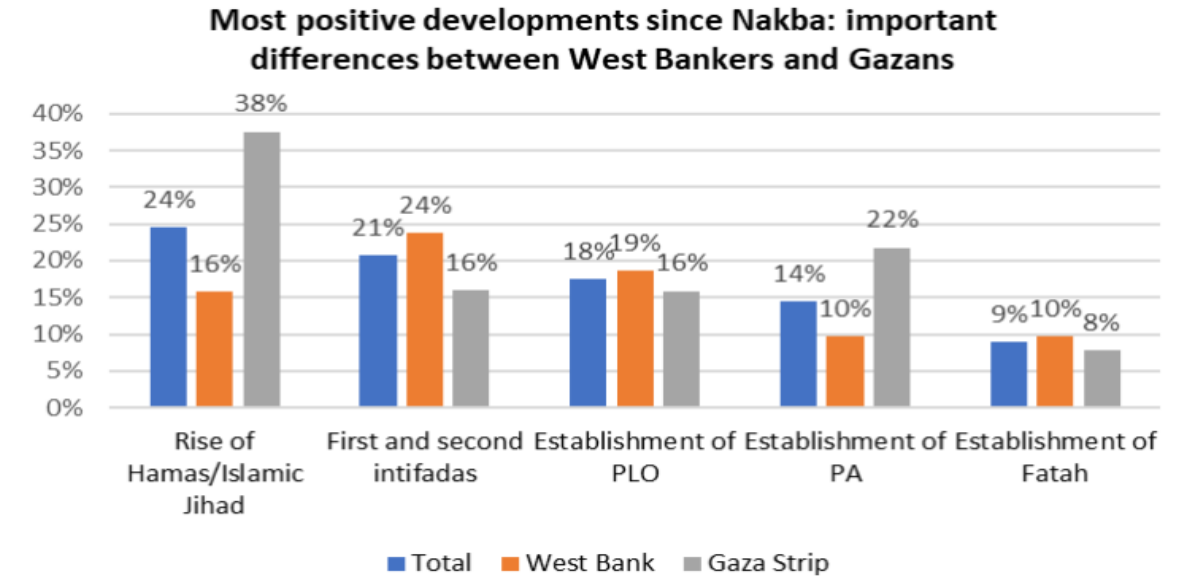


Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR), June 2023



# 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



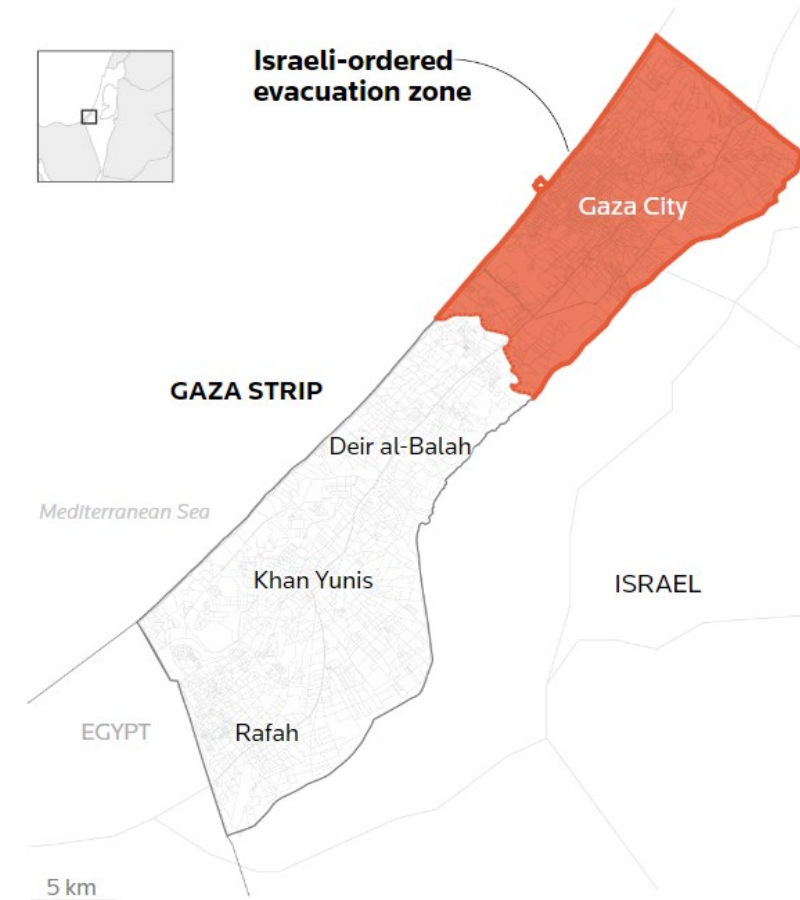
**Key Implication: Hamas Radical Support Can Easily Grow During War in Gaza**

# 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



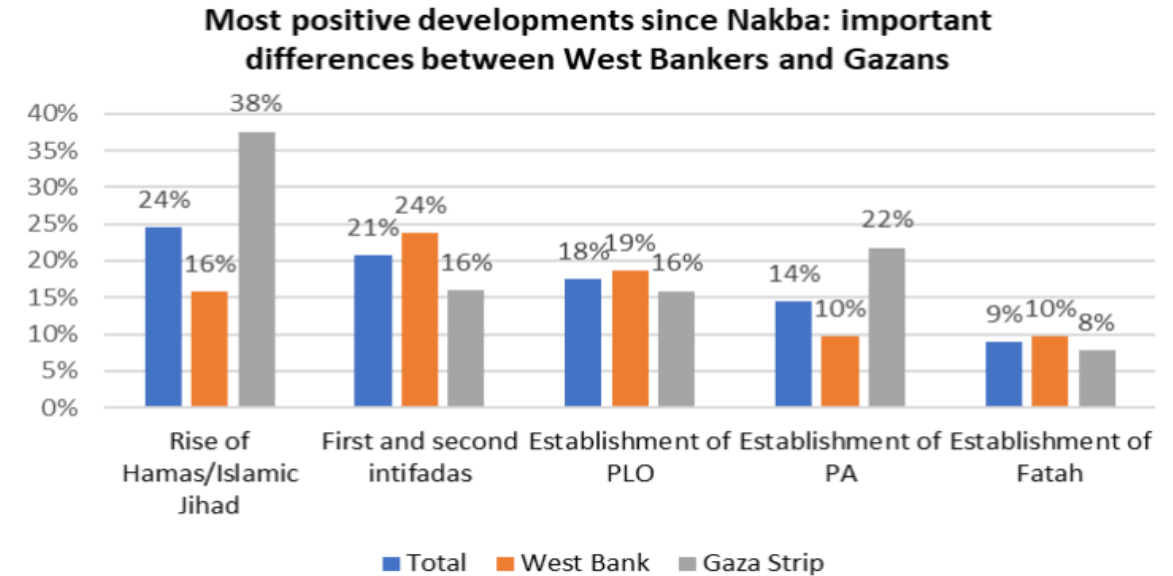


Even with IDF Attrition,  
 Hamas fighters could grow  
 Well beyond current size of  
 15,000 to 30,000 --  
 Many as suicide attackers

# RISKS OF ESCALATION IN WEST BANK

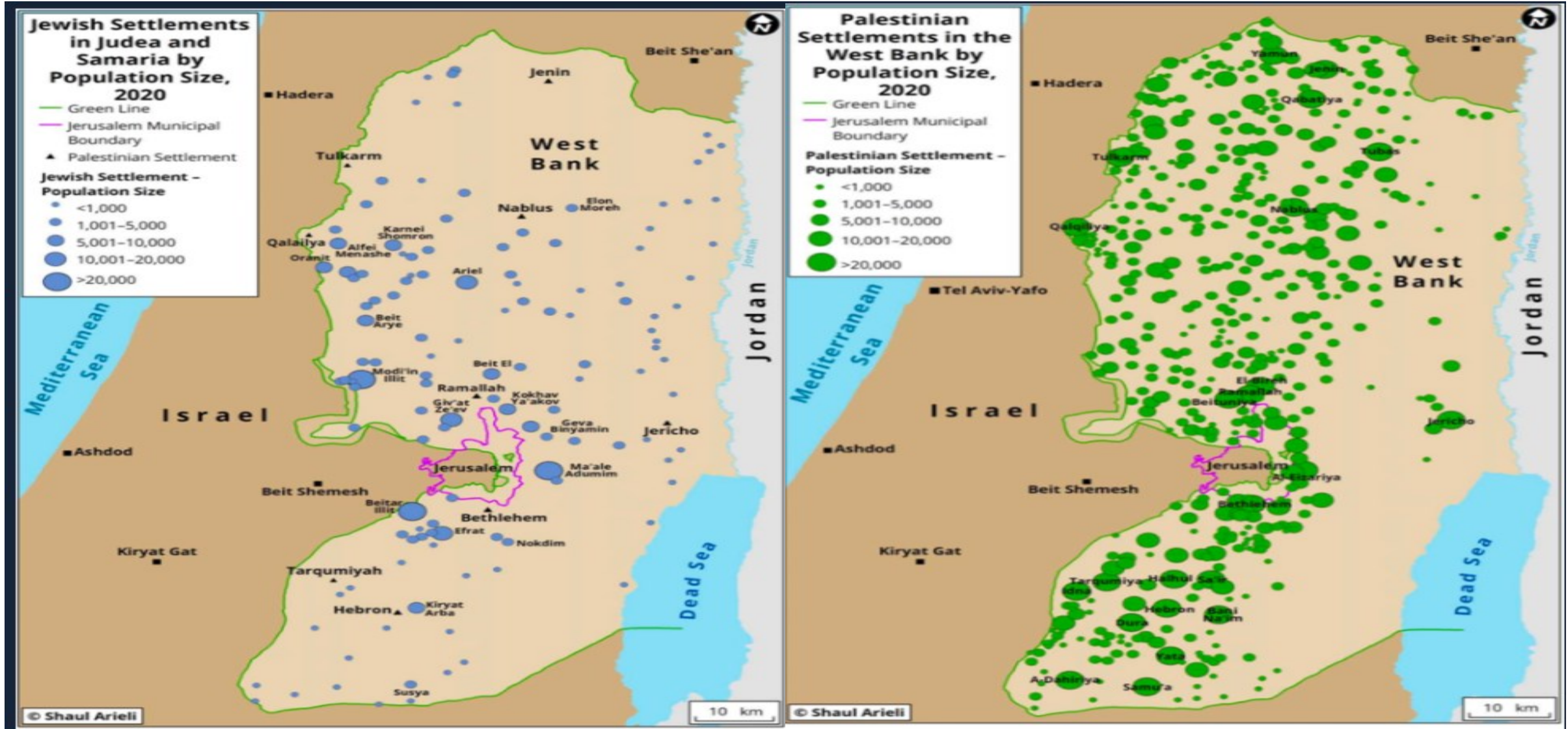
# WEST BANK SUPPORT FOR ANTI-OCCUPATION VIOLENCE > HAMAS

- 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





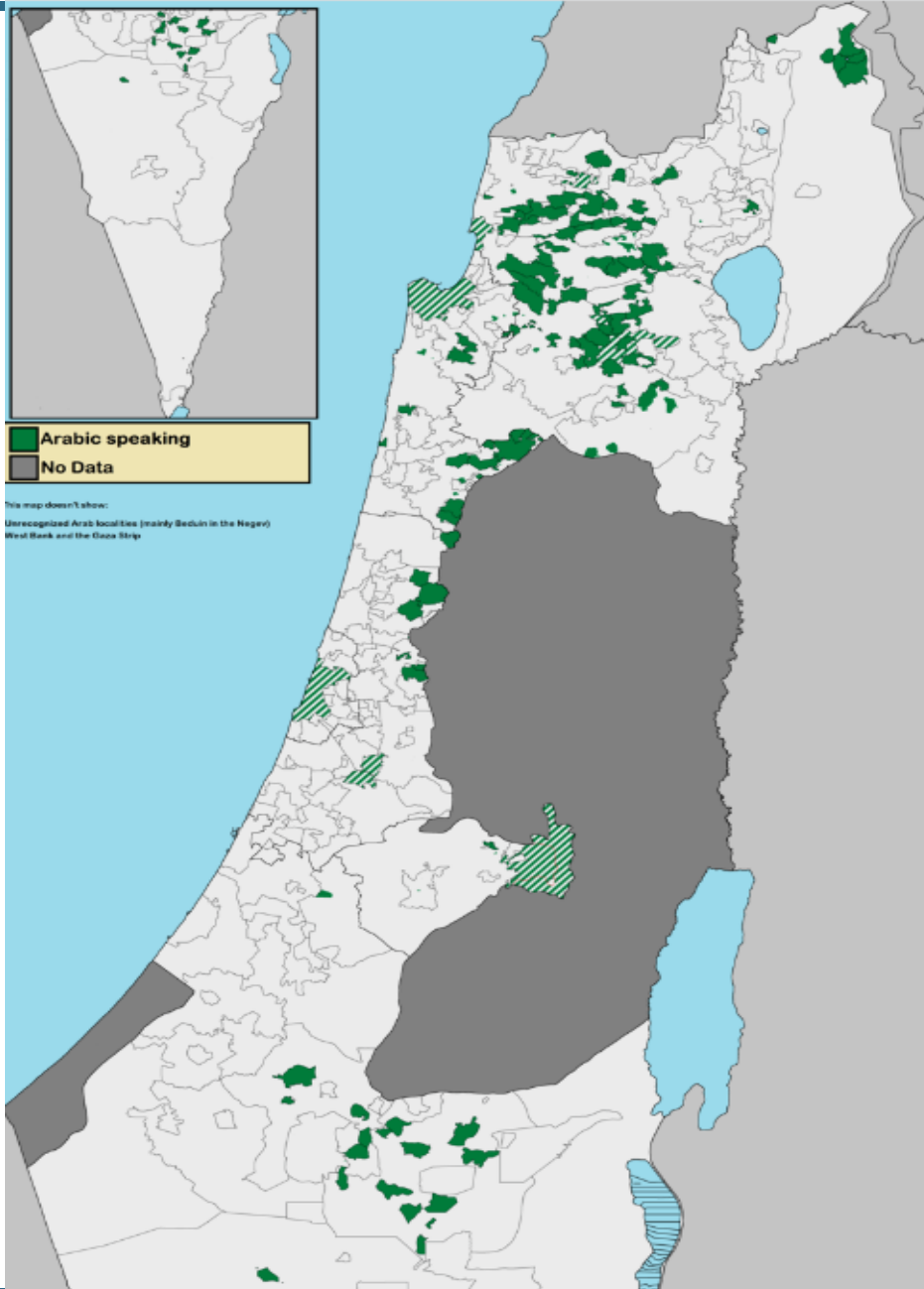
## Arabic speaking localities in Israel

**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



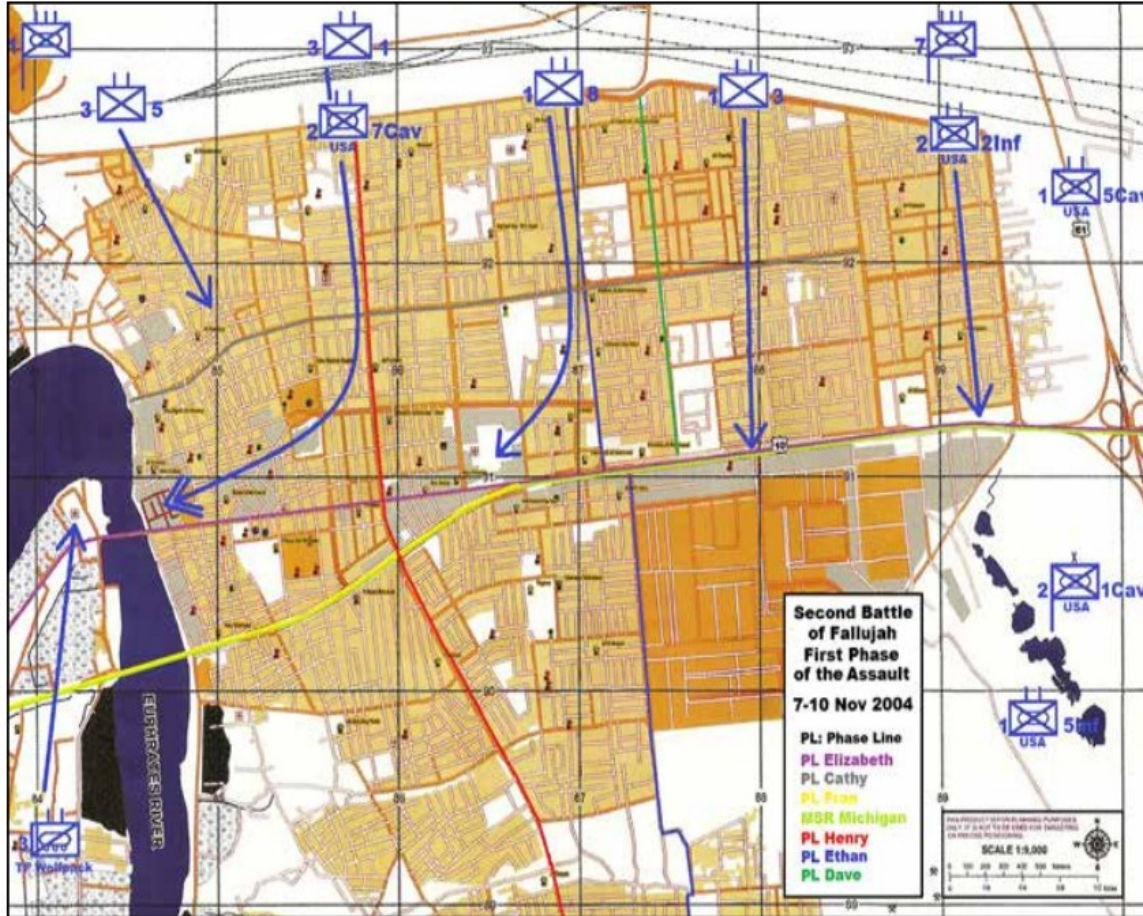
Hamas Radical Support  
Could Well Grow in West Bank,  
including Suicide Attacks  
against Jewish Settlers and Israeli Cities

## SIEGE OF FALLUJAH, IRAQ (2004) IS CLOSEST ANALOGY





# BATTLE OF FALLUJAH, IRAQ NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2004



Official U.S. Marine Corps map adapted by History Division



Photo by LCpl James J. Vooris

A Marine (left) from Company I, 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, and an Iraqi soldier search a room in Fallujah during Operation al-Fajr.

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



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## 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**

2004 Battle of Fallujah  
added momentum  
to the insurgency

- **Civil war in Iraq from 2006 to 2008**

Total US military deaths, 2003-2008: **4,222**

Iraqi Civilian Deaths, 2006-2008: **>150,000**

## 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





Hezbollah =

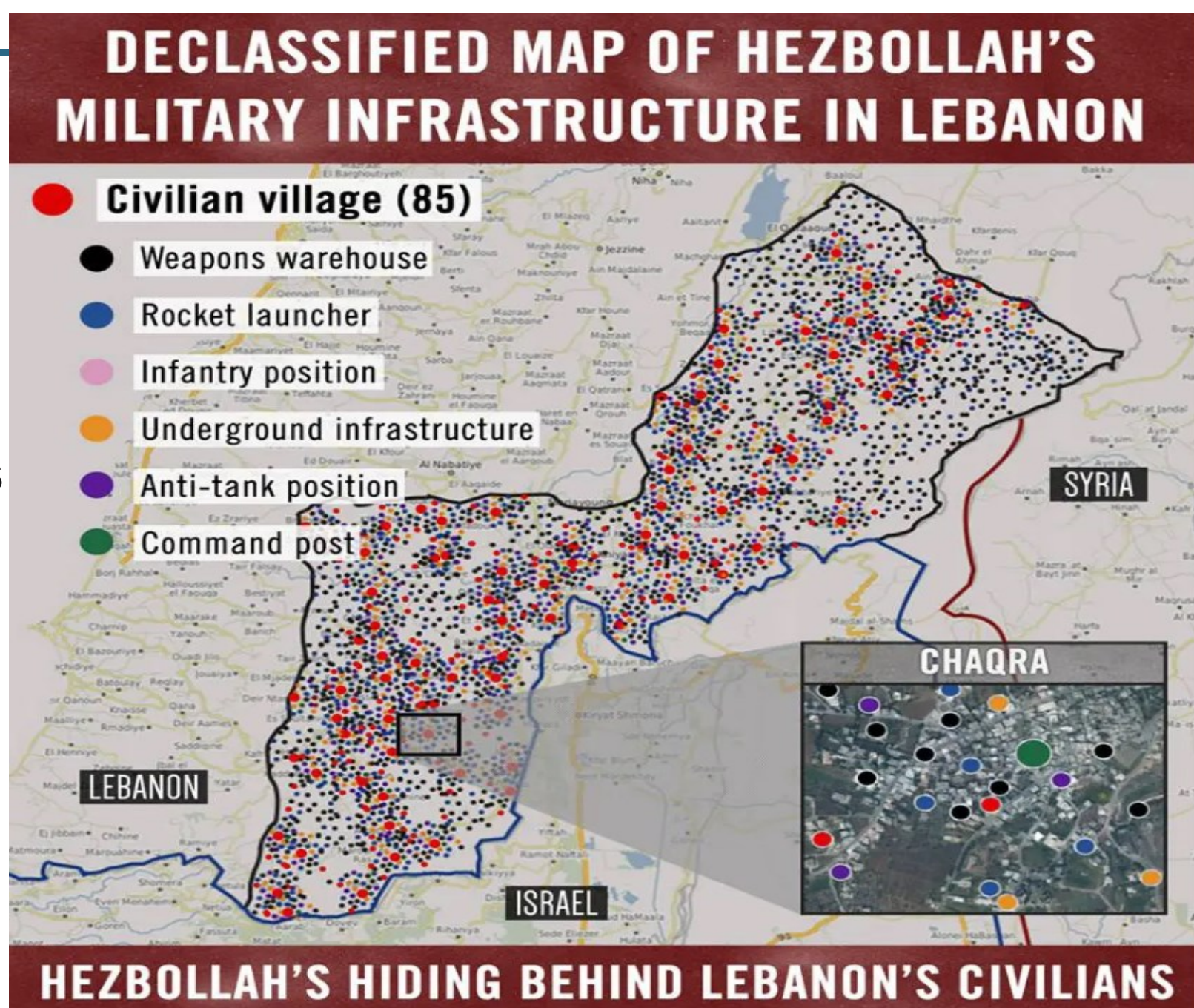
25,000 fighters

40k-150k Missiles/rockets

Both 10x 2006

Complex Defenses

Declassified Map 2016





# IRAN: ISRAELI AIR STRIKE VS NUCLEAR FACILITIES?





	<u>2018 May (Deal) *</u>	<u>Aug 2023</u>
<u>Natanz</u>		
Centrifuges	5,060**	
3.5-5% LEU	300kg+	2880kg
Amt for bomb	1250kg	
Bombs	0	2
<u>Fordow (Qom)</u>		
Centrifuges	1,044**	
20% LEU	0*** +	536kg
Amt for bomb	140kg	
Bombs	0	4
60% LEU	0	122kg
Amt for bomb	40kg	
Bombs	0	3
<b>Total:</b>	<b><u>0 bombs</u></b>	<b><u>9 bombs</u></b>
<u>Time to bomb</u>	> 1 <u>yr</u> (if cheat)	1 bomb < 12 <u>days</u>
*US withdraw May 2018		+5 < 1 more <u>mon</u>

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