



WAR ON ISRAEL

Jeanne McKinney examines Hamas and Israel's race to secure the grail of power in the Middle East

The following article is largely based on a series of one-on-one interviews with an unnamed member of the IDF community who remains anonymous due to security issues in an active war. A name has been assigned to protect this warfighter: IDF Community Member (IDFCM).

A little over a year from the heinous Hamas massacres on Israel's civilian communities and military posts on 7 October, Israel finds itself fighting in a war on seven fronts – Gaza, West Bank, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Iran and Yemen. On 14 October, Brigadier General Amir Avivi – founder and Chairman of Israel Defense and Security Forum (IDSF) – gave a briefing reviewing the progress of dismantling these terrorist groups' attack plans and operations. He begins lamenting when Israel's defence system failed to intercept and destroy two drones

launched by Hezbollah that made it to training base Golani, (near the town of Binyamina) resulting in the deaths of four Israeli soldiers and injuries to others.

The Golani Brigade, a unit in the IDF 36th Division, is considered an elite Army unit. Two Golani battalions were there on 7 October and suffered grievous casualties, reported FDD. A battalion computer and communications officer explained how hi-tech plays a huge role in IDF's 'circle of fire' to identify and bring the fight to the enemy, minimising friendly fire. That day, as hard as it was fighting in multiple locations, Golani, like 300,000 other soldiers called up to respond to the 7 October attack, spent over ten days defending Israeli villages from a second Hamas wave – eliminating all invading terrorists.

To compare, at the height of the war in Afghanistan Obama had surged 100,000 US troops into the country.

Those forces worked with nearly 190,000 Afghan security forces to destroy the Taliban chokeholds and entrenchment throughout the land. Fifty other nations were part of the ISAF coalition engaged in the goal to defeat al-Qaeda and Taliban allies.

Israel has had no such help to fight terror. Yet, to date, the Israel War Database shows it has killed 101 Hamas leaders. Ground operations in the Gaza Strip as of 23 October, included an IDF airstrike on a Hamas command and control site in Gaza City, IDF 162nd Division clearing in Jabalia, and elements of IDF 143rd Division operating in Rafah. The IDF has announced multiple evacuation zones in the Gaza strip since December 2023.

Post 7 October, the game drastically changed and Israeli troops trained to enter Gaza, taking over strategic locations. At this point, there was no more border between Gaza and Israel proper. Gazans were not crossing over into Israel to work. Outsiders, including US officials, were crying foul to Israel for the human suffering in Gaza – demanding aid be let in. "Israel enables aid to get into Gaza, says IDFCM. Yet we are faced with terrorists taking over the food trucks, just like they did in Somalia. So, it is with Gaza." He adds, "That's true Islamic power. The terrorists take it by force and if you want anything, you get it from them. It is a microcosm of how the Middle East works – it is the one who carries the biggest stick."

Outsiders do not understand the Middle East cultures, believes IDFCM, and he is not the only one who thinks the US empowers the wrong people. Plenty of Americans agree speaking up on podcasts, talk shows and in the news. Right now, the US is empowering the terrorists they fought originally in Afghanistan by sending them billions in cash (something we'll cover in more detail in a future issue). Biden rewarded Tehran for seizing American hostages – empowering them with a \$6-billion release of Iranian assets for the Mullahs. This was preceded by a \$1.5-million ransom payout by Obama for kidnapped Americans in 2009 and in 2016 another \$1.7-billion plus seven jailed Iranians in exchange for five American hostages.

Conversely the Trump administration secured the release of more hostages seized without ransom payments and used only a prisoner swap, outlines the Heritage Organization.

If we pay, Iran will continue to seize hostages. "The money will bolster Iran's embattled dictatorship, provide it with additional resources to violently repress its own people, and boost the threat posed by its missiles, drones, proxy groups and advance its threshold nuclear weapons program."

Global security is not solved by laying down to terrorists' demands. We must make the demands. The world must recognise in Gaza they have enjoyed full Palestinian autonomy, able to build what they want, do what they want and yet have allowed Hamas to blow their opportunities and set them up for failure and war. This, while Israel has supported them. With a population of four-five million in both Gaza and Judea Samaria (West Bank) "why don't they have their own power plants, waterworks, etc., as they have a ridiculous amount of money?" questions IDFCM.

To give context: "Five million people have received ten times more than what the Marshall Plan put into the rebuilding of Europe." Congress appropriated

\$13.3-billion for post-World War II recovery. "That's how much foreign aid has gone to the Palestinians," IDFCM explains.

Yet Israel is the one starving the Palestinians, reports mainstream news. There is no official Palestinian 'state' and Hamas' invasion is for land indigenous to the Jews. Power speaks the loudest and Israel has demonstrated that to Hamas, Hezbollah and their parent Iran since day one of this war began on 7 October.

ISRAEL IS NOT WASTING ITS TIME OR GIVING SECOND CHANCES TO ISLAMIC TERRORISTS

Brigadier General Avivi has been transparent about Israel's actions and the goal: "to bring the Iranian regime to its knees, and really deprive them of any future nuclear capabilities. This is not a campaign that can be done in a week or two. It might be many months." As the major campaign evolves, Israel's eyes are on the US election and the new president. "We really hope it will be an administration that will be proactive because we want to deal militarily with Iran because there is no other way to change riots in the Middle East," confirms Avivi, adding, "If Israel needs to do it alone, we'll do it alone, but it's much better to have a coalition dealing with this."

Avivi acknowledges after speaking with one of Israel's air defence generals: "Israel has really focused a lot on building capabilities to deal with rockets and missiles, but a bit less focus on the drones. We need to do a further buildup of capabilities," yet assures, there is no technology gap or shortage of means: "The Army needs to buy more radars of different kinds, procure capabilities like they had in the past... and in the coming couple of months the laser will become operational, and this will help a lot."

Israel's Iron Beam laser air defense system operates against rockets, mortars, UAVs, cruise missiles, and low-flying targets. The Iron beam will equalise effectiveness with economy of air defence to shoot down missiles and drones that are cheaper for terrorists to deploy. The new laser weapon in concert with the Iron Dome missile batteries that can deal with large rocket barrages and are not impaired by weather, helps Israel further tighten its defence envelope. The IDF is operating with seven divisions, three in the South and four in the North, remaining proactive and fierce with its responses.

As the capabilities of Hamas and Hezbollah degraded rapidly, Israel started to look to the East. "Israel is shifting the centre of gravity of the buildup of the forces to Iran," said Avivi two weeks after Iran fired 180 missiles into Israel in what Iran claimed was a response to killing Hezbollah leader, Hassan Nasrallah. The Israeli military said most of the missiles were intercepted, although some landed on the ground. At that point, the world watched – sat back and did nothing to Iran and instead became worried that the war "would escalate". Israel is already fighting terror on seven fronts; is that not major escalation?

The view of Israel from a former Lebanese army outpost that IDF forces took



This map illustrates the fronts that Israeli forces are currently fighting

A recap of Israel’s strategic moves in a Middle Eastern world that only respects might. The *Wall Street Journal* reported, first Israel removed the Hamas de facto government out of the Gaza enclave, destroying strategic terrorist complexes in an expansive labyrinth of tunnels spanning 640km, leaving fewer places to hide. Then, it took out Hezbollah’s leadership and started ground operations in border areas of Southern Lebanon. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu put

THE US IS EMPOWERING THE TERRORISTS THEY FOUGHT ORIGINALLY BACK IN AFGHANISTAN

his sights on Iran in a tit-for-tat move for an Iranian ballistic missile attack on Israel on 1 October.

Israel wasted no time to hunt its targets down. Yahya Sinwar, the architect of the 7 October massacres who lived in Gaza’s subterranean city, was on the top of the list. On 16 October, Israel struck, killing Yahya Sinwar, by forcing him from the tunnels. Israel’s internal security agency Shin Bet has

been busy working with the military, ratting out the underground and securing communities above ground, to prevent these same people from ever attacking Israel again.

Sinwar had a chance to escape, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, in exchange for allowing Egypt to negotiate a release of the hostages still held by Hamas, but he refused. That may be hard to believe because Israel will never forget the horrors of 7 October, and most likely, once located, would have never let Sinwar continue his plan to remake the Middle East. Sinwar’s shocking assent to war resulted in devastation for Gaza and widespread suffering throughout the region. People, homes and livelihoods were wiped out as he sought to cut off the hand that gave Gaza a chance.

What have we learned so far from Israel? It is not wasting time or giving second chances to Islamic terrorists. Its diplomatic relations with other Arab states have to date survived this war. It stays at the planning tables and develops defensive and offensive strategies by day. It responds with resilience and precision to the countless attacks it has endured this past year. It wants to bring the remaining hostages home and is leaving a legacy as a terrorist terminator in the bloody game that erupted on 7 October.

Israel is growing its defence industry, producing its own armaments. “You want to be as independent as possible,” says Avivi, acknowledging Israel does depend on the US National Security Council decisions as allies. “We need to produce our own munitions and have an Army big enough and sophisticated enough to defend the people of Israel. We do not expect anybody to fight for us.” That said: “When we talk about Iran and the threat to the globe, it is not just Israel’s problem. It is a global issue and needs to be treated as such.”

“America likes strong allies, not weak allies,” believes Avivi. Israel is proving it every day. One small country has literally deconstructed leadership of two regional terror groups and is gearing up to face wild card Iran. Israel is determined, ready, and exacting ●

Part three of this series will examine Israel’s first ever attack on Iran’s military bases that was unprecedented, as well as the latest developments in the Hamas, Hezbollah, Iranian war on Israel.



JEANNE MCKINNEY IS AN award-winning military journalist, book author, and documentary filmmaker. She recently published the true historical account of *Triumph Over the Taliban: The Untold Story of US Marines’ Courageous Fight to Save Camp Bastion* (now on Amazon). McKinney also wrote, directed, and is currently producing a limited documentary series called *Ronin 3: The Battle for Sangin* - that follows 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines through a labyrinth of murder holes and IEDs in a heavily entrenched Taliban stronghold in 2010, on mission to restore security to the local Afghan people.



A night shot from a former Lebanese army outpost that IDF forces took over. Israel is in the background.