

This Week Today **Current Events from Israel -** **by Ben Packer**

Undoubtedly most folks are constantly checking new sources during these very contentious times. Whether that is a good idea or not, this week we will make an even greater attempt to keep things brief and to the point, and of course as always, very accurate.

In the spirit of accuracy, the number of deaths of Israelis from the terror attacks of Simchas Torah has reportedly surprisingly gone down and it's now estimated that 1200 were killed and 200 more bodies are actually those of killed terrorists. The current estimate for the number of terrorists who participated in the pogrom is now 3000, 1000 of which were killed in and around the Jewish communities. 243 hostages are believed to be still held by Hamas and other terror organizations in the Gaza Strip.

The war continues to intensify. However, before we get to that, let's start with some humor: Yemen has declared war on Israel. Some people think this is an attempt to attract Israeli missiles to be fired on Yemen and they then can scrounge after the scrap metal and try to make a few bucks. Classic Yemenite economic policy.

The Houthis who control large parts of small Yemen have been firing rockets and drones at Israel. So far, they have hit Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Israel has shot down anything coming our way. One of the intercepts was with the new "Arrow" missile defense system. This is considered by many to be a major game-changer in Middle Eastern weaponry and could have wide-ranging geopolitical implications, especially concerning Iran. This turnoff of events with Yemen definitely more involves Saudi Arabia, who has been in conflict with the Houthis in Yemen, their southern neighbor, on and off for years, into the current conflagration. If the point of all this was to scuttle Israeli-Saudi diplomatic relations, it appears it may have the opposite effect.

In other ridiculous diplomatic shenanigans, the garbage unproductive in any way country of Bolivia has cut all diplomatic ties with Israel. Other intellectual powerhouses, Columbia and Chile, are following Bolivia's lead, which should have been enough to show them how stupid a move this is. All of these countries have histories of supporting the sacrificing of babies and rape, so that very well could be the source of the comradery they feel with the wild ass (pera adam") sub-humans currently emanating from Gaza.

Ground Incursion Commences

With all that diplomatic nonsense out of the way, let's get to the important stuff. Israel launched a ground invasion of Gaza this week. So far, it has been very successful. Here are some details:

-Israeli forces have been able to more or less conquer the northern Gaza Strip areas, including the villages of Beit Hanoun and Beit Lachia. Gazan residents were told repeatedly to move south from these areas over the past few weeks.

-The Jabayla refugee camp has been attacked extensively and the main Hamas military base there has been destroyed and its commander eliminated.

-Gaza City is virtually surrounded at this point by Israeli forces. The Gaza Strip is now divided into northern and southern separate, but equal, sections. The bulk of Hamas military infrastructure, their terrorist leadership and possibly the hostages are believed to be located in or under Gaza City.

-17 Israeli soldiers have been tragically killed. Many of them from the Tzabar Battalion of the Givati Infantry Brigade (the unit where I served).

-Hundreds of Hamas terrorists have been killed.

-Rockets continue to be shot from Gaza, but with much less frequency and effect.

-One hostage, a female Israeli soldier, was rescued and returned to her family! This was very happy news and all of Israel celebrated. Obviously strenuous efforts are being made to locate and rescue the rest of the hostages. There were rumors throughout the week, since the ground incursion commenced, that more hostages had been rescued, but there has been no confirmation of this.

-The fighting throughout the Gaza Strip is constantly intensifying.

-President Biden has recently called for a temporary cessation of the fighting. That is not going to happen old man.

Lebanon

Sporadic attacks continue to take place by Hezbollah and other terror groups across the northern border of Israel. Israeli forces retaliate to each attack and the reported number of terrorists killed has reached 50. Israel did not suffer any casualties this week, Baruch Hashem. For the first time in this conflict, some projectiles were directed at the Golan Heights but did not result in any casualties. Hezbollah had previously promised to more actively join the war if Israel entered the Gaza Strip. This hasn't happened as of yet, but pressure from Iran and the Arab world for them to do so seems quite intense.

Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria

Things remain relatively quiet throughout the rest of the country. Israeli security forces have arrested close to 1000 terrorists in Judea and Samaria, many of them affiliated with Hamas, but not all of them. Approximately 10 terrorists were killed this week in Jenin and the head of the Fatah terrorist group, affiliated with the Palestinian Authority, was arrested. A border policeman was stabbed in Jerusalem but is recovering. The terrorist was eliminated by police.

The country continues to be in good spirits and unity prevails. Head of the Opposition parties in the Knesset, DJ Yair Lapid said some right-wing things this week that no one took seriously. There have been calls from former heads of Israeli "intelligence" agencies for Prime Minister Netanyahu to resign. Ironically, these are the exact people actually responsible for the failure to prevent the recent attack. Them and all of those who supported destroying the Jewish communities and removing the Israeli military from the Gaza Strip back in 2005. In hindsight, and at the time, an incredibly stupid thing to do.

New US Ambassador to Israel

Former Obama Administration official, Jack Lew, was confirmed by the US Senate this week as the new US Ambassador to Israel. Guy seems like quite the bureaucratic dork, so hopefully he won't be able to cause too much damage. He claims to be Shabbat observant, so at least he'll know how to pray at the Western Wall, unlike the previous am Haaretz dork.

Once again, we can look to this week's Torah Portion to better understand the current conflict. In Parshas Vayeira, Yitzchak is born and Ishmael, his half-brother and founder of the Arab nation, tries to kill him. The solution: Ishmael has to go away. That's not make this whole Gaza thing more complicated than it needs to be.

This week was also the yahrzeit of Rabbi Meir Kahane, hy'd. In short, he was right.