

(Slide 1)

Last week, the Islamic Republic of Iran essentially entered a war directly with the state of Israel. There's no other way to put it. When you fire 170 drones, 30 cruise missiles, and 120 ballistic missiles at another sovereign nation, you are now in a state of war.

This has been a long time coming. The Islamic Republic of Iran has been using all of its proxy terror groups to attack Israel. Iran is using Hezbollah in the north of Israel, Hamas in the south of Israel, and the current attacks from the Houthis in Yemen.

The whole conflict started on October 7 with the Hamas massacre because Iran was deeply afraid that Israel was about to sign a new Abraham Accord with the Saudi government (agreement to normalize relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia). Everyone was openly discussing it, and that would have solidified a Sunni-Israeli pact against Shia aggression in the Middle East.

Sunni and Shia?

Islam has two main branches: the Shia and the Sunni. This split in the religion comes down to a political and spiritual difference of opinion about who should have succeeded Muhammad after his death in 632 CE.

Major views and beliefs are often similar between the two branches because Sunnis and Shias are both Muslims, but some important differences exist. Tensions and conflicts between Shias and Sunnis are very similar to those that have at times existed between Catholics and Protestants.

200 Million Shia Muslims

1.2 Billion Sunni Muslims

If the peace accord between Israel and Saudi Arabia had taken place, Iran then would have effectively been boxed in because the reality is that an American-backed Sunni-Israeli alliance would be extraordinarily powerful in the region. It would be a massive counterweight to terror groups in Yemen as well as Hezbollah, Hamas and Iran itself. Iran was feeling boxed in.

So, Iran activated the October 7 massacre through General Mohammad Reza Zahedi, the head of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps and its terror operations in Syria, Lebanon, and via Hamas in Gaza.

Iran ordered the October 7 attacks that killed 1,200 Israelis and took 250 hostages, with 133 Israelis still missing and most presumed dead.

The reason the latest attack happened is because Iran saw the gap. Israel took out the general who had authorized the October 7 attacks, and Iran was faced with a political problem: It would be seen as weak by its own people for not responding to Israel taking out General Mohammad Reza Zahedi in Syria.

They couldn't be seen to look weak in the face of this.

So now, a little history so you can understand the talking heads on the evening news.

(Slide 2)

First, let's identify where this is all happening. The Gaza Strip.

A small strip of land in the Middle East, bordering the Mediterranean Sea, between Egypt and Israel.

It is slightly more than twice the size of Washington, DC and 64% of its population is under the age of 24.

There are 2 million people living on the Gaza strip and they are 98% Sunni Muslims. (CIA World Factbook)

Israel removed settlers and military personnel from Gaza Strip in September 2005 So there are no Jewish people living there.

Inhabited since at least the 15th century B.C., Gaza has been dominated by many different peoples and empires throughout its history; it was incorporated into the Ottoman Empire (The Turks) in the early 16th century.

Gaza fell to British forces during World War I, becoming a part of the British control of Palestine set out by the Treaty of Versailles at the end of WWI.

(Check out the Balfour Declaration/Lawrence of Arabia)

Following the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, Egypt administered the newly formed Gaza Strip; it was captured by Israel in the Six-Day War in 1967.

Under a series of agreements signed between 1994 and 1999, Israel transferred to the Palestinian Authority (PA) security and civilian responsibility for many Palestinian-populated areas of the Gaza Strip as well as the West Bank.

In early 2003, the US, EU, UN, and Russia, presented a roadmap to a final peace settlement by 2005, calling for two states - Israel and a democratic Palestine.

Following Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat's death in late 2004 and the subsequent election of Mahmud ABBAS (head of the Fatah political party) as the PA president, Israel and the PA agreed to move the peace process forward.

Israel in late 2005 unilaterally withdrew all of its settlers and soldiers and dismantled its military facilities in the Gaza Strip, but continues to control maritime, airspace, and other access.

You sometimes hear another term referring to this area.

(Slide 3)

Palestine, Is the eastern Mediterranean region, comprising parts of modern Israel and the Palestinian territories of the Gaza Strip (along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea) and the West Bank (west of the Jordan River).

The term Palestine has been associated with this small region, which some have asserted also includes Jordan. The region (or at least a part of it) is also known as the Holy Land and is held sacred among Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

The word Palestine derives from Philistia, the name given by Greek writers to the land of the Philistines, who in the 12th century BC occupied a small pocket of land on the southern coast, between modern Tel Aviv and Gaza.

Now to the Players:

(Slide 4)

Iran

Known as Persia until 1935, Iran became an Islamic republic in 1979 after the ruling monarchy was overthrown and Shah Mohammad Reza PAHLAVI (the Shah of Iran) was forced into exile.

Conservative clerical forces led by Ayatollah Ruhollah KHOMEINI established a theocratic system of government with ultimate political authority vested in a religious scholar referred to commonly as the Supreme Leader who, according to the constitution, is accountable only to the Assembly of Experts - a popularly elected 88-member body of clerics.

US-Iran relations collapsed when a group of Iranian students seized the US Embassy in Tehran in November 1979 and held embassy personnel hostage until mid-January 1981. The US cut off diplomatic relations with Iran in April 1980.

During the period 1980-88, Iran fought a bloody, indecisive war with Iraq that eventually expanded into the Persian Gulf and led to clashes between US Navy and Iranian military forces. Iran has been designated a state sponsor of terrorism since 1984.

Israel

Following World War II, the British withdrew from their control of Palestine, and the UN partitioned the area into Arab and Jewish states, an arrangement rejected by the Arabs. (Both sides were promised Palestine by the Brits)

Subsequently, the Israelis defeated the Arabs in a series of wars without ending the deep tensions between the two sides.

In keeping with the framework established at the Madrid Conference in October 1991, bilateral negotiations were conducted between Israel, Palestinian representatives, and Syria to achieve a permanent settlement to the dispute.

Israel and Palestinian officials signed on September 13, 1993 a Declaration of Principles (also known as the "Oslo Accords") allowing for an interim period of Palestinian self-rule.

Progress toward a permanent status agreement was undermined by Israeli-Palestinian violence between September 2003 and February 2005.

As I stated earlier, Israel in 2005 unilaterally disengaged from the Gaza Strip, evacuating settlers and its military while retaining control over most points of entry into the Gaza Strip.

The election of HAMAS to head the Palestinian Legislative Council in 2006 froze relations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA).

Israel engaged in a 23-day conflict with HAMAS in the Gaza Strip during December 2008 and January 2009.

Prime Minister Binyamin NETANYAHU formed a coalition in March 2009 following a February 2009 general election. Direct talks with the PA launched in September 2010 collapsed.

So, in summary, why are Israel and Hamas current enemies?

Hamas won Palestinian elections in 2006 and reinforced its power in the Gaza Strip after ousting West Bank-based Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' Palestine Liberation Organization, PLO, in clashes the following year.

While Mr. Abbas' Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) had signed peace accords with Israel, Hamas does not recognize Israel's right to exist and advocates the use of violence against it.

Israel, along with Egypt, has maintained a blockade of Gaza since about 2006, in order, they say, to stop attacks by militants.

Israel and Hamas have gone to war three times, and rocket-fire from Gaza and Israel air strikes against militant targets are a regular occurrence. That is what we were seeing on the news before this all blew up.

(Slide 5)

HAMAS

Hamas goal is to create a single, Sunni, (yes, not Shia, but they all hate Israel) Islamic state in historic Palestine, which is now largely divided between Israel and the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. Hamas, means “zeal” in Arabic and is an acronym for Islamic Resistance Movement.

Hamas’s charter calls for Israel’s destruction, and Hamas has engaged in terrorist activities.

Hamas’s leadership grew up in the late 1940s, mostly as impoverished offspring of Palestinian refugees.

Many of Hamas’s leaders were educated in Cairo during the rule of Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser. Present members include religious leaders, sheikhs (Arab chiefs), intellectuals, technocrats, businessmen, young activists, and paramilitary fighters.

To cultivate support, Hamas has provided social services to the needy in the 11 refugee camps in Gaza.

Providing social welfare and education through clinics, kindergartens, summer camps, medical services, sports programs, and job programs has tied the Hamas leadership to its supporters. (Does this sound familiar?)

These facilities were built directly over the underground tunnel system being used by Hamas in Gaza.

Mosques and Islamic religious organizations have been Hamas’s most important vehicles for spreading its message and providing its services. Partly funded by its members, most funds come from sympathizers abroad.

The group was founded in 1988 as a militant segment of the Palestinian Arab national movement and was connected ideologically to the Muslim Brotherhood, which was founded in Egypt 60 years earlier.

Hamas firmly opposed the 1993 Oslo Accords, in which the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel engaged in mutual recognition for the purpose of Israel's gradual transfer of power, land, and limited self-rule to the PLO.

After denouncing the September 1993 Oslo Accords, Hamas increased its strikes against Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as well as in Israel proper.

It boycotted the January 1996 Palestinian presidential and legislative council elections. The elections were won by the opposing political party, headed by PLO leader Yasir Arafat.

The boycott was in part because Hamas knew it would lose the election, but also Hamas wanted to avoid giving legitimacy to the PLO's recognition of Israel.

Under the accord, Israel, the United States, and Western European nations asked the newly created Palestinian National Authority (PNA) to suppress Hamas's attacks.

Arafat periodically restrained Hamas terrorist actions against Israel but he did not suppress them altogether.

In March 2004 Israel Defense Forces assassinated the Hamas leader Ahmed Yassin in a helicopter gunship attack as Yassin left a mosque in the Gaza Strip.

The next month, Israel assassinated his successor Abdel Aziz al-Rantissi, a cofounder of Hamas.

In both cases Israel claimed that these two men were responsible for killing Israeli civilians. Israel announced it would continue such targeted assassinations as part of its war on terrorism.

The assassinations occurred as Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon said he was ready to unilaterally evacuate some 9,500 Israeli settlers from the Gaza Strip in 2005.

In early 2006, the Islamic Resistance Movement, HAMAS, won the Palestinian Legislative Council election and took control of the PA government.

Attempts to form a unity government between the PLO and HAMAS failed, and violent clashes between PLO and HAMAS supporters ensued, culminating in HAMAS's violent seizure of all military and governmental institutions in the Gaza Strip in June 2007.

Hezbollah

Hezbollah is a Shiite Muslim political party and militant group based in Lebanon, where its security apparatus, political organization, and social services network have created its reputation as “a state within a state.”

The Iran-backed group is driven by its opposition to Israel and its resistance to Western influence in the Middle East.

With its history of carrying out global terrorist attacks, parts of Hezbollah—and in some cases the entire organization—have been designated as a terrorist group by the United States and many other countries.

In recent years, long-standing alliances with Iran and Syria have transformed Hezbollah into an increasingly effective military force.

Fatah

Fatah, political and military organization of Arab Palestinians, founded in the late 1950s by Yassir Arafat with the aim of wresting Palestine from Israeli control by waging low-intensity guerrilla warfare. These folks are primarily in the West Bank. In the late 1980s it began seeking a two-state solution through diplomatic avenues, and its leaders were prominent players in the Oslo peace process that established the Palestinian Authority.

(Slide 6)

Houthis

The Houthis emerged as a rebel group in the late 1980s and '90s, but grew in military might after the turn of the century and went to war with the Yemeni government.

In 2014, the Houthis overthrew the country's government and gained control of the capital, which the militia still controls today. Houthis follow a branch of Shia Islam, as does the Iranian leadership, which helped lead to their alliance.

In 2015, a coalition of countries led by Saudi Arabia launched a military attack in Yemen on behalf of the internationally recognized government in an attempt to beat back the Houthis. Saudi Arabia is a top rival of Iran, which supports the Houthis with weapons, intelligence and other political and diplomatic aid.

The Houthis managed to withstand the offensive and remain in control of large swaths of territory and much of the Yemeni population.

The Houthis are aiming to block Israeli ships from passing through the Red Sea until Israel halts its military operations in Gaza. These are the folks who are attacking all the ships in the Red Sea and keeping our Navy busy.

So, there you have it folks. Think this can be solved by signing treaties, or is this a conflict that can only be settled through force?

It is not going to solve itself. It will probably only get worse in the coming months. The big question is, do you think the US should play a role in any of this?

If you find this topic interesting, please visit your local Camden County Library where we have pulled resources from our collection that can help you in furthering your knowledge of Israel and Hamas and the current conflict we are seeing on the nightly news.

Chapter & Chatter Café Additional PowerPoint Slide Information

Chapter 3 – Israel & Hamas

April 25, 2024

Slide 8

(Filler slide transitioning from Jim's piece to highlighted resources and upcoming events)

Slide 9

Would you like to read the latest news about Israel & Hamas, Ukraine & Russia, or what is happening nationally? Keep abreast of the latest news internationally and nationally with the *Chicago Tribune*, *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *The Washington Post* for free. Your library card gives you access to these five major dailies to enjoy reading from the comfort of your home or on the go via your smartphone, tablet, or computer. The newest issue is available by 8 am Eastern time every day.

Are you conducting research and need articles from older newspapers? Read full-text articles from as far back as the 1980s. With the U.S. Major Dailies resource you also have access to over 4,000 scholarly journals, the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* videos, read the *New York Times Book Review*, *New York Times Magazine*, or the *WSJ: The Magazine from the Wall Street Journal*.

A library card is required to access this online resource. Please see one of our friendly staff members on how to get a library card and for help accessing any of our online resources.

(www.cclld.us/digital-library/ and then click on 5 Major U.S. Dailies)

Slide 10

The University of Missouri Extension office of Camden County has partnered with us to bring the public and our patrons an exciting six-week program that helps us learn how we can Get Healthy Through Gardening. This six-week program will happen on Wednesdays. Our first session was held on April 24 and the remaining sessions will run through May 29, 2024, at 1:30 pm in the Camdenton Library Meeting Room.

We invite you to join us as we engage in this fun and exciting hands-on nutritional and gardening adventure with activities and discussion topics. Some of the topics we will be exploring include:

- Learn how to make healthy food choices
- Learn how to read nutritional labels
- Learn how growing a garden can help you save money on your food bill
- Learn about planting, cultivating, harvesting, composting, and so much more!

Get signed up today by calling the Camdenton Library at (573) 346 – 5954 or clicking on the link in the description or chat box.

Slide 11

Local author, Jamie Graham will be at the Camdenton Library on Thursday, May 16, at 10 am for a special reading of his latest book, *Home is Where the Heart is....* Jamie has spent most of his life in Central Missouri and has called the Lake of the Ozarks home since 2001.

Jamie, born with a hearing problem leaving him with a speech disorder, hasn't let his disabilities get the best of him. Jamie has learned to use his talent as an artist and storyteller to share his feelings with others. What started as a hobby for Jamie has turned into a promising career. Jamie is now known for his cartoon-style illustrations for Special Olympics and you can find his name in the Special Olympics Hall of Fame for his service to individuals with disabilities and his achievements. Jamie has even drawn pictures of famous baseball players and actors. His free spirit illustrations and stories have touched many. When asked what his biggest dream is, Jamie will tell you it is "to get a book published so that everyone can share [his] pictures."

Home is Where the Heart Is...., is Jamie's fourth published book and is a reflection and memoir of Jamie's life here at the Lake of the Ozarks. He is excited and looking to share his latest book with others near and far. Copies of Jamie's book will be available for purchase on the day of the event.

Slide 12

Want to learn more about these events and others that each of our six library branches hosts each week? Be sure to pick up the latest copy of our quarterly magazine *Between the Pages* or read it online.

Slide 13

Before heading out on vacation this summer, let the adventure begin at your library. We will be kicking off our annual summer reading challenge in the upper parking lot of the Camdenton Library on Saturday, June 1st, starting at 10 am. We will have tables set up for everyone to sign up to participate in our summer reading challenge and will have booths with crafts vendors, face painting, easy-to-make crafts for kids, and entertainment under the tents that includes Sparkie Da Clown, Babaloo, and Lake of the Ozarks Blues Society. Enjoy food from the fabulous Not Just Any Place Café food truck. And so much more!