



MAY: The Islamic Republic of Iran provides Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad rockets and other weapons, technology, training and funding. Over 11 days in May, the two groups fired more than 4,000 rockets at Israeli cities and villages. President Biden supported Israel's right to defend itself, but at the same time, his envoys in Vienna have been negotiating a return to President Obama's Iran deal. Iran's rulers want billions of dollars and other concessions in exchange for allowing America to rejoin a deal that, at most, slows their progress towards a nuclear weapons capability. Since money is fungible, that would mean America will be helping fund Hamas and Islamic Jihad, as well as Hezbollah and Ansar Allah in Yemen. Joining me to discuss these developments is Lahav Harkov, Senior Contributing Editor and Diplomatic Correspondent of *The Jerusalem Post*, Jonathan Schanzer, FDD's Senior Vice President for research and Brad Bowman, Senior Director of FDD's Center on Military & Political Power. I'm pleased you're with us here too on *Foreign Policy*.

Let's start with your analysis of what sparked this battle. I'll ask you first, Lahav, in part because much of what has appeared in American and European media has struck me as either ignorant, credulous, or both. Let me just give you a couple examples. *USA Today* said this battle began with Israelis evicting Palestinians from their homes in East Jerusalem.

HARKOV: Which is false. Right? Just completely false.

MAY: Yeah. It's a dispute over rent and it's in the courts, right? Sorry, start with that one.

HARKOV: Yeah. Nobody's been evicted yet. The dispute is very complicated, and it goes back. The legal dispute goes back to the 1970s, but in a nutshell, Jews bought the land in the time of the Ottoman Empire and lived there. Come 1948, Jordan occupies Jerusalem, Jews can't live there anymore and then Jordanians move Palestinians in, but don't actually give the Palestinians the deed to the land. Those Palestinians and their descendants are living there to this day. But in the 1970s, the Jews who owned the land, or the descendants of the Jews who owned the land, and had the deed to the land, started fighting it in the courts. In the beginning they just wanted ownership, and they just wanted the Palestinians to pay them rent.

Later on, an organization bought the deed to the land and in some cases, they were okay with paying rent, in some cases they wanted to evict those Palestinians. But the bottom line is, where it stands right now is that a lower court—The Palestinians, some part of the Palestinians, some fraction of the Palestinians have refused to pay rent all along. The current court case is about four families that have refused to pay rent. The lower court said they could be evicted. Now we're waiting to hear what the Supreme Court will say. So, nobody has actually been evicted even though over and over and over again we see in the news that this was sparked because they were evicted.

MAY: And here's one point I just want to make and have you comment on. When you say Jews couldn't live there anymore after 1948 when the Jordanians by military force, took East Jerusalem. That's a kind way to put it because the Jews were expelled. They were –

HARKOV: Of course.

MAY: – ethnically cleansed. Religious sites were desecrated. Now if the international community says, "well, the expulsion of the Jews and the desecration of the religious sites, that's legal and that has to be honored. The people who hold the deeds to these lands and who are dispossessed, they have no rights." You're saying something that you wouldn't say anywhere else in the entire world that I can think of. Am I right?



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HARKOV: Yeah. I mean, and the thing about this, right, is that you have people at the State Department trying to pressure Israel to stop the eviction. You have Israelis telling them, like Ambassador Gilad Erdan saying to them, "We're a democracy, this is our court. We have a separation of powers." We don't tell the Supreme Court what to decide.

MAY: Right. You know, Jon, other publications echo the charge that Mahmoud Abbas said, that the reason for this battle was Israelis had stormed the Al-Aqsa mosque. That's not true either, is it?

SCHANZER: Well, it's not. What we continue to see is that Israelis continue to visit the Al-Aqsa mosque. There are Israelis that would like to one day see the temple rebuilt, but when they storm the Al-Aqsa mosque, which is how it is often written in the Palestinian press, and in some cases the American press, it is a gross exaggeration of what takes place. Where you just simply have Jews going up on the Temple Mount, often accompanied by security, I think for somewhat obvious reasons. But that has been, in recent years that has come to be described as storming. There is no storming that takes place there, it is literally people who are there because it is a religious site holy to both religions.

MAY: Well, this is an important point. Most of our listeners will know, but some may not, that when we talk about the Al-Aqsa mosque compound, we talk about the Temple Mount, we talked about the Western Wall. They're all in one place, essentially and the other things that you had is you did have rioters up on the Al-Aqsa mosque compound with stones and Molotov cocktails, which they were to throw down to a lower level where there would be Jewish worshipers and so the police said, "well, that you can't do. You can pray up there. Muslims can pray up there." Not only that, but the Al also-Aqsa mosque is under the authority of a Jordanian religious establishment and the Israelis agreed to that after they took this area from Jordan in a defensive war, the defensive war of 1967.

I'm going to give you one more example of the bad media coverage, because it's just been unbelievable. *CBS News'* Elizabeth Palmer, she claimed that Hamas launched over 100 rockets into Israel, "in response to Israeli airstrikes." Of course, on May 10th the airstrikes began after Hamas said to the Israelis, "You have to follow our instructions on several things. If you don't, we will attack you." The Israelis said, "Well we don't actually take orders from terrorists. This is not happening in Gaza. We're just not doing anything you say." So, Hamas attacked now. Jon, I'm going to get back to you on this. I have to figure that Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad were preparing for this, looking for a pretext for this, and probably had discussed with – Excuse me, with Iran's rulers. How about now, is this a good time to do this? Is that credible to you?

SCHANZER: Oh, absolutely. I mean, look, for the last seven years Hamas has been preparing for a next round of conflict. That is what they had done. They have been establishing rocket making facilities, rocket storage facilities. They created this tunnel system that the Israelis have come to call the Metro. There was this huge military apparatus all built with the assistance of Iran, with guidance from Iran. In some cases, with some of the weapons provided by Iran. Certainly, the know-how provided by Iran. There was training where Palestinians would go to Tehran and actually get trained by Iranian commandos from the IRGC and return back to Gaza in preparation for a fight. The Israelis, by the way, had been documenting all of that and they accumulated what is now commonly known as a "target bank." This is a bank of targets that were legally approved in advance by the IDF, knowing that Hamas was building its own military arsenal and building this infrastructure.

So, both sides had been preparing for this moment. Israel was not going to launch an attack unprovoked, but certainly when Hamas began firing those rockets, the Israelis had pre-approved targets to strike in response. But one thing I'll just note, Cliff, just one additional note here. Is this idea that somehow it was because of the Sheikh Jarrah real estate dispute, or that this all started because of what happened on the Al-Aqsa mosque. We have been hearing from the media for, really



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since the beginning of this conflict, that whenever a conflict erupts, it's a single point of failure. Right? Ariel Sharon walked on the Temple Mount, therefore, we had five years of a Second Intifada.

That is an insane proposition. It was a coordinated Palestinian campaign of violence, that's what happened in 2000 to 2005. Even going back to 1929, the first disturbances, right? Is even to this day blamed on Jews asserting their right to pray in the Western Wall compound and that is what stoked the ire of the Palestinian community, which in turn carried out an organized campaign of violence. It is really, we continue to see the same trends historically in the media, and it's very frustrating to watch.

MAY: Let me just, I want to bolster what you just said with a couple of quotes that most of the media are not reporting, and this is from memory, which does invaluable translations. This is a quote given to *RT*, the Russian service, or Russian propaganda service, by Hamas' deputy political chief Moussa Abu Marzouk. He said, "This is just one of a series of wars and a war will come when we negotiate with them, the Jews, about the end of their occupation and their leaving of Palestine." Not just the West Bank, not Gaza, which they left in 2005, all of Palestine. That's what they're aiming for. Those who support Hamas are supporting that. By the way, this is a little transitional, Ismail Haniyeh who is also a chief figure of Hamas. On Friday he thanked the Islamic Republic of Iran who did not hold back, with money, weapons and technical support.

Let me use that as a segue to you, Brad, to talk about the weapons that they use. Because in what ways was this different from the war in 2014 and what ways wasn't it? What did they have new that they had gotten from Iran in terms of strategy and in terms of technology? I want to keep in mind, people say, "Oh, there's a terrible blockade. There's a siege of Gaza." Well, they were able to get in lots of weapons technology, trained terrorists, and all of that despite that. Of course, last week as aid was coming in from Israel, Hamas decided to attack the convoy, bringing the aid to average Palestinians. I don't think Hamas' people were going without meals. Brad, talk a little bit about what you saw from Hamas this time out in terms of militarily.

BOWMAN: Thank you, Cliff. It's the evolution that we've seen over time in terms of Hamas' capabilities has been quite extraordinary. I mean, if you go back years, and they had custom rockets were relatively quite short-ranged. To what we're seeing now, where both in terms of the volume, right? The volume of strikes and how many missiles they launch in a particular timeframe. Right? Roughly 4,300 rockets in 11 days. I mean, a much higher volume than we've seen in the past, but also, those rockets going much, much further. A higher percentage of those strikes were going to Tel Aviv and major population centers. So longer range, larger warheads and then in addition to the rockets, an increased focus on urban centers farther and farther from Gaza. We're also seeing the use of drones, which is quite concerning, right?

Because drones can loiter and then attack at a given time. We've seen the employment of unmanned underwater vehicles and so all of these things leave me with a couple big ideas. One is that when we see an adversary like the Islamic Republic of Iran developing new weapons, Americans and Israelis need to understand. The Israelis, of course, understand this better than some Americans do. That sooner or later those weapons are going to find their way into the hands of terrorist groups, like Hamas and Hezbollah. And they're going to be used—

against us and our allies. That's exactly what we've seen. Thankfully, Israel wasn't standing still during all these years either, and that's why we've seen such a relatively good outcome.

But this is a race. In the U.S. China context, I often talk about a research and development race between us and the Chinese communist party. Israel's in a same sort of race with Tehran and its terror proxies, and thankfully Israel is



winning for now. But the more that groups can try to demonize and isolate Israel with these false attacks and the use of human shields, the more I'm concerned about what we're seeing in the U.S. Congress and elsewhere in terms of false accusations of Israel.

MAY: I want to follow up on just a couple of things you say, Brad, because I think they're interesting. Yes, Hamas used underwater drones kind of like unmanned submarines, but they really had a whole naval capability here. As I understand it, correct me if I'm wrong, look, they started with missiles, and the missiles weren't doing what they should do, largely because of Iron Dome. Then they said, "okay, well, if we can't get over what really is the only border there, it's more than just a line because the Israelis don't claim anything in Gaza, haven't since 2005 – so let's go under that border. We'll dig tunnels", and the Israeli's have used technology and all sorts of things to make it very hard for them to tunnel into Israel and kill people and take hostages and all that.

So, they said, "okay, let's go by sea", and they started a naval capacity, which was not successful this time out. But it included, absolutely, the underwater drones and unmanned submarines. But it was more ambitious than that, really, it just didn't work out. Am I wrong on that?

BOWMAN: No, I think you're right And you describe it well. In Pentagon parlance, we talk about all-domain warfare. Sea, air, land, space, and cyber space. Big surprise, terrorist groups are going to use all of these different domains as well, to try to kill the innocent. That's what we've seen them do here. We've seen them in the sea and undersea domain with unmanned underwater vehicles. We've seen them certainly in the air domain, obviously, with rockets and drones and even in the underground domain. Maybe we need a new domain there in Pentagon parlance, because they've these terror tunnels for years and of course that's something that Israel has been focusing on for many, many years. Identifying, destroying these underground terror tunnels that they use to not only launch the rockets but infiltrate fighters into Israel to kill IDF service members, and also kill innocent Israelis in their beds.

This is actually a quick area of where there's been a real bright spot in U.S.-Israel cooperation. Israel is really counting the lead on developing the technology, but the United States came along with some funding and Americans have benefited from this Israeli developed technology and identifying ISIS terror tunnels in places like Syria and Iraq and using that same technology, frankly, on our Southern border to identify drug tunnels. So, it's just yet another example where Americans selfishly benefit when we help our closest ally in the Middle East better defend themselves.

MAY: One more question on this. The dog that didn't bark, or more precisely the dog that didn't bite is Hezbollah. Because Hezbollah's got 150,000 missiles, much more sophisticated including precision-guided munitions, which theoretically, I think could evade Iron Dome, because they are so maneuverable, as well as overwhelmed, which was more what Hamas was trying to do with sheer numbers.

At the end of the day, if Hezbollah had said, "Okay, we're supporting Hamas, we're starting to launch missiles," certainly would have been more challenging for Israel to fight on two fronts in this war, wouldn't it?

BOWMAN: It would. I'm eager to hear John's thoughts. He's done so much research on this, as well. I would just quickly say that Israel has a lot of cause to be confident coming out of this conflict, because they were able to destroy a good portion of the Metro. A lot of these different Hamas weapons systems they were able to effectively address this time but when you compare Hamas to Hezbollah, and this is really where Jon has done a lot of work both in terms of the quantity of rockets and missiles that Hezbollah has, and the precision-guided munitions, which your listeners need to understand,



these are weapons that can maneuver in flight. They are much more difficult to intercept and hit precisely what they're intended to hit.

So, if you think of a nuclear power plant, or a chemical plant, or an urban center being precisely hit by Hezbollah terrorists, and then you combine that precision with volume, a barrage, a salvo, then very quickly, you can start to have capacity concerns with respect to Iron Dome. Iron Dome is awesome, it's proven itself once again, more than 90% effectiveness. But if you have Hezbollah coming at you, instead of 4,300 you've got 20,000 coming missiles, and a good portion of those are precise, I think very quickly becomes a serious concern for Israel.

SCHANZER: One thing that I would say though, Cliff, just to add to this is talking about that dog that didn't bark. We did see some rockets fired out of Lebanon during this most recent round. There was a salvo that went into the Mediterranean, there was another salvo that went – Actually that landed inside Lebanon, fired from Lebanon into Lebanon, which of course we saw a lot of on the part of Hamas.

What I will just note here is that in 2018, the Israelis issued a statement to the UN and in that statement, there was a complaint that the Israelis had identified the fact that there were Hamas operatives working in close collaboration with both Iran, as well as Turkey, to establish a Hamas stronghold inside Lebanon which would be used to draw Israel into a two-front war in a future conflict.

Now, we don't know exactly what happened here, which groups fired these shots. We know that Israel fired back with artillery, and really what looked like a lackluster response, especially because these rockets didn't hit anything, and no real threat was posed to Israel. But there are questions, I think, looking ahead, at what Hamas may try to do, especially when you think about the chaos that is about to envelop Lebanon, because it is right now economically insolvent and politically about to collapse. There may be an opportunity for Hamas, with its patrons in Turkey and Iran, to capitalize on that chaos and potentially draw Israel into a two-front war, which would of course change everything. Both in terms of missile defense, but also in terms of deployment.

MAY: Great. Well, how about something else that most of the Western media didn't get. The extent to which this fight between Hamas and Israel was a proxy war or a fight between Hamas and Fatah. Between Hamas and Mahmoud Abbas and the Palestinian Authority. That it sensed – Tell me if you think this is going too far – This battle was Palestinian elections by other means.

HARKOV: From the get-go, a lot of analysts didn't even think that the election was going to really happen, because there haven't been elections in 15 years, and there had been false starts before. As the election day got closer, like more and more factions were sort of breaking off of Fatah, and they weren't showing a united front and so it seemed certain that Hamas would do better than Fatah in the parliamentary election.

In the meantime, Hamas was campaigning. You know, Hamas is in Gaza, and the elections were taking place in the West Bank, and the Palestinian Authority wanted it to take place in East Jerusalem, as well. Hamas was campaigning on Jerusalem as an issue. So, this whole, the incitement over Jerusalem began weeks before most people were paying attention. Then Abbas canceled the election, and his excuse was that Israel wasn't allowing the election to be held in East Jerusalem. Which, first of all, Israel did not answer. Basically, it was like, "New phone, who's this?" They did not want to answer Mahmoud Abbas.



The reason was, basically, if they facilitated the election, if Israel facilitated the election and Hamas won, that would be bad. If Israel said outright, "We're not facilitating the election," then Abbas could go to the world and say, "Oh, look, Israel doesn't want us to have a democratic election." Of course, the second thing happened anyway, even when Israel was silenced.

The important point is that under Israeli law, all of Jerusalem is part of Israel. There is no entity called East Jerusalem. It's all sovereign Israel and the Palestinian Authority wanted to set up voting booths for a different entity that is not part of Israel in sovereign Israel, and I don't think that that's an expectation that you would have anywhere else in the world again.

They could have had absentee voting. They could have had some kind of app. That was what the European Union suggested that they create an app, and they rejected all those things.

MAY: Right, before we discuss outcomes, I want to discuss intentions. War aims. In other words, just speak a little bit. What do you see as having been Hamas' war aims, its theory of victory, if you will? what were Israel's war aims, what was its theory of victory, if you will?

BOWMAN: Thanks, Cliff, you know, I'll defer to Jon on the politics at play there, but just at a top level, I would say that it seems to be that Hamas wanted to reinsert its leadership among Palestinians and standing up to Israel, and there was a little bit of – If they did not lose, if they were not completely defeated, than that was victory. There., we would call it in military a strategy, we'd call it center of gravity. What is the key thing in your opponent you're trying to attack, and what's the key thing you're trying to protect in yourself? With them, I think if they didn't lose, then they could declare victory and twist the facts and so forth.

But one of the key things that I find troubling is that when people talk about what happened between Israel and Hamas, they point to the suggestion of moral equivalence which this crowd understands well. But I think so many Americans need to just think a little bit more precisely about and one of the first things you'll hear is the relative casualties on both sides, and every casualty is an absolute, genuine tragedy. But some people suggest, and I had an interview the other day where this was a suggestion, that because there are more Palestinian casualties, than that means that Israel is more culpable.

As anyone who's served on a jury or watched a judicial thriller on TV or just has any basic sense of fairness, motives matter. Was it premeditated murder one, or was it manslaughter? Were you trying to kill someone on purpose, or was it an accident? If you look at the interview of the co-founder of Hamas, I just tweeted about it, he brags about the fact that Hamas was trying to murder civilians and he says outright, "I don't recognize Israel's right to exist."

So, if you have one side that is deliberately trying to murder civilians by launching 4,300 rockets and says the other side doesn't have a right to exist, and then you have Israel, which is taking extraordinary measures to protect civilians, any suggestion of moral equivalence is just kind of morally bankrupt. Even if you look at the AP building, one of the more controversial strikes here – Even the *Associated Press* itself admits that no one died in that strike. Why is that? That's because Israel warned people so that they could get out and unfortunately, by warning innocent civilians, Hamas also had a warning, and they, of course, escaped and took their computers with them. But that's a price that Israel is willing to pay in order to protect innocent lives and I think a lot of that nuance is lost in the discussion.

MAY: You know, look, the numbers – I may not be exact, but what I've seen from, at least from the Israelis, I kind of believe a little bit more than the Palestinian Health Ministry, But the numbers are not that different. The Israelis probably



killed – I think the last number I saw, Jon, you can, you’ve seen roughly – It was 232 Palestinians. Of those, Israel claims 200 were Hamas operatives and 25 of whom were fairly senior operatives.

You also had something close to 20% of Hamas missiles not hitting Israel and falling back into Gaza. Also causing deaths and casualties, because there are no bomb shelters built by Hamas, except for those who can go into these tunnels, and that’s only very high Hamas members.

By almost any international standard that I know, Brad, there are innocents being killed, but this is not a huge number, when thousands of missiles are being fired.

BOWMAN: Every rocket launched, if Hamas launches a rocket next to civilian home or civilian infrastructure with the deliberate intent to kill civilians, that’s two war crimes right there. Every one of those 4,300 rockets launched towards civilians in Israel using human shields, civilian human shields, that’s two war crimes. The fact that they’re unsuccessful because Israel has developed effective missile defense and a lot of Israelis have places that they can go to be safe that doesn’t change the moral character of what Hamas is doing. They’re still trying to kill civilians and they’re still committing war crimes. I don’t think enough Americans can reiterate that fact.

MAY: Jon, how do you think the Abraham Accords held up?

SCHANZER: Oh, it was interesting. On the one hand, the criticism coming out of the Gulf states, out of Sudan, out of Morocco was tempered. You didn’t see the same kind of vitriol that we’ve typically viewed coming out of the Arab world during one of these conflicts and I would say in that sense, the Abraham Accords held.

The negative side of that is that we still saw a lot of statements coming out of the Gulf, kind of popular sentiment being voiced out of the Gulf that was taking Israel to task for responding defensively to the rocket launches that were coming out of the Gaza Strip in a war that was launched by Hamas that Israel had to respond to. So, they’re still finding themselves kind of up against a wall dealing with a barrage of criticism from across the international community, including from these countries where they’ve made peace. So, one of the things that I think this war did was it kind of showed that the architecture of the Abraham Accords was able to stand throughout, right? That’s really good news that it’s still solid.

I do think though that it exposed some of the weaknesses in that architecture, that we have to now think about how to engage with Israel’s new Arab allies. So that look, if they want to criticize Israel for a specific military tactic or their social media messaging, as we know that was one of the issues that they took issue with back in the middle of the war, fine they can do that, that allies can criticize one another. But if they’re not taking Iran to the woodshed, when it is the sponsor of Hamas, it’s really disappointing and moreover, why wouldn’t they criticize Hamas itself? It’s been very clear that the Arab states are deeply opposed to Hamas because of both its ties to Iran as well as to the Muslim Brotherhood and so the animosity has been there for years. Why they decided to hold back during this conflict, after making peace with Israel, when Israel was not to blame for the eruption of the conflict, really, I do think it raises some questions that we’ll be able to explore in the weeks and months, or perhaps even years ahead on our visits to the Gulf.

MAY: There’s one other question I want to stick with you on, Jon, others can jump in, of course, but it’s important we talk about it and that’s how Biden did in this instance And two things. One is, here’s a quote from him that I was pleased to see. He said, “My party still supports Israel. Let’s get something straight here until the region says, unequivocally, they acknowledge the right of Israel to exist as an independent Jewish state there will be no peace.” Wow. I mean, I’m very pleased to see him say that. On the other hand, what displeases me, you mentioned this in the introduction, is that he



doesn't seem to understand that giving billions of dollars to the Islamic Republic of Iran, the patron of Hamas and Islamic Jihad and Hezbollah, and others is a way of supporting those who say very clearly and equivocally Israel has no right to exist as a Jewish state, and therefore there will be no peace. I mean, he's sort of playing both things against the middle here. No?

SCHANZER: Yeah, he did. Look, what I would say is there are actually five kind of small areas to touch on here to kind of rate how Biden did, and I'll go through them quickly here. The first is the decision on the part of the Biden administration to allow for Palestinian elections that would include Hamas in the first place. For a couple of months, the Biden administration gave a green light to Hamas participation thereby giving Hamas legitimacy. Then finally, when the administration decided to temper that support, that's ultimately what tipped the scales and I think prompted Mahmoud Abbas to cancel those elections, or at least to continue with what he probably wanted to do in the first place.

But in other words, what the Biden administration did is it set the table for this conflict because Hamas could not participate in the elections and so therefore, they tried to use this war as elections through other means, and it is wildly popular to fire rockets on Israel, unfortunately, in the Gaza strip. This helped to bolster their position in Palestinian politics.

Then comes the war itself. Okay. During the war, the first 10 days of the war, Biden did exceptionally well. He gets high marks. He gave Israel a green light, even after the bombing event, *AP Al-Jazeera* building. There was a question about whether Israeli intelligence backed up their claims, the Israelis showed it to them in intelligence channels, the Biden administration accepted it and allowed the Israelis to continue on with their war without intervention. They allowed Israel to finish tackling all the targets that they needed to, and Biden gave the Israelis top cover at the UN, also here at home with the statements that we've already mentioned. So that was very positive.

Then comes the last two days of the war. And this, I have to say, this was very frustrating to me although perhaps understandable. With two days left in the war, I started watching on Israeli TV, there were reports that a ceasefire had been reached and that it was within 24 hours we were going to see it take effect. It was during that time that's when we began to see Biden coming out and talking tough about Israel. Where he comes out and he says, "I read Bibi the Riot Act and I told him to cut it out." This happened all after he already knew that Israel had agreed to a ceasefire. So it was, he was basically using a blank check that the Israelis had given him so that he could signal to the squad and to Bernie and do the hardcore progressive left in the United States and I have to say it was very disingenuous. Of course, Bibi did the same thing after Biden began this, then he started telling the Israelis, "I am not going to stop this conflict until I've reached all of my targets." There was a lot of posturing on all sides, but it didn't need to happen, and I think it gave everyone a false sense of tension within the U.S.-Israel relationship when it didn't exist during that week.

Now, two more things to note the Biden administration claimed victory from the ceasefire. It did not broker the ceasefire. Biden said he made 80 phone calls and he was working the phones. I'm sorry, it was Egypt start to finish. It was Egypt's job, and they did it well. By the way, they allowed Biden to take credit for this so that they could finally start to have relations between the Egyptian president and the American president after four months of the silent treatment.

Now, the last thing, which we've all mentioned, is the issue of Iran. The tension begins now because the administration is about to enter into the Iran nuclear deal again. It will be providing a huge amount of cash to the Iranians and that money will trickle back to Gaza and what it means actually is that, I mean, assuming Bernie Sanders doesn't have his way, the United States will be funding both sides of the next Hamas Israel conflict. In other words, they are supporters of Israel, and they provide military assistance and indirectly the United States through the Iran nuclear deal is going to be giving probably hundreds of millions of dollars to Hamas through a pass through otherwise known as the Islamic Republic of Iran.



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MAY: Let's move to outcomes and with this caution that we don't know exactly at the end of this sort of battle who has won, it's not that decisive. So, you have Hamas marching the street saying, "there's a great victory." You have various claims being made by Israel, depending on if Israel's war aim is to make it impossible for Gaza to open up as another front, over another three, four or five years, it's going to take a while to know that. Anyhow, what do you see? Do you see an outcome to this that's clear or at least some trends in terms of not who won or who lost, but who secured an advantage and who had disadvantage?

BOWMAN: No, thank you, Cliff, if I may real quick, just one comment building on what John said, and then definitely go to that with your permission.

Jon talked about kind of some of the things we're seeing on the far left here in the United States. I think I'd be remiss if I didn't emphasize what we've seen both in the Senate and the House with people trying to block U.S. arm sales to Israel, particularly the sale of precision-guided weapons, what we, in the military world, call Joint Direct Attack Munitions. So, for people who don't focus on weapons stuff full-time let me just explain what this is. These are systems that the U.S. has had for a long, long time for decades where you can take a technology and you put it on basically a free fall dumb bomb and make it smart so that it can become guided, so it can maneuver and can hit targets more precisely. So, this is something that Israel likes to have from the United States. This is something that the U.S. has and the whole point of this technology is to hit more precisely what you're trying to hit. To hit the bad guys and protect the innocent. This is exactly what Israel already has some of and what we want them to have, because when someone is killed, it's an accident. So, if you help our Israeli allies and partners be more effective in hitting the bad guys, you're helping to prevent civilian casualties.

So, on the far left in the House and the Senate, if you try to block that that's the exact opposite of what we should be doing and just shows you how ridiculous some of these political attacks on Israel are becoming. Blocking the very thing that will help Israel more effectively defend themselves against terrorists efforts at murdering civilians while protecting the innocent.

Then one other quick thing is Israel is going to need some help on replenishing some of their stocks of Tamir interceptors, these Iron Dome interceptors. They're going to need these JDAMs delivered. There's going to be other areas where Israel is going to need help. The more we help them, the more secure Israel can be and the more cautious they can be in how they respond the next time Hamas or PIJ and others try to launch thousands of rockets into Israel. What we're seeing on the far left in terms of blocking weapons sells Israel is really the worst possible thing that we can be doing from an American perspective and an Israeli perspective.

But Cliff, to your question on kind of larger takeaways. I think there's certainly lots here that Israel can be happy with in terms of its ability to collect intelligence on what Hamas is doing, to destroy a good portion of so-called Metro, the underground terror tunnels that are used to infiltrate terrorists and launch rockets, and the destruction of some of the maritime infrastructure we talked about, the taking down of the drones, intercepting 90 plus percent of the rockets. There's a lot here that Israel, I think, can be very, very happy with.

Just as a friend of Israel, I think we don't do ourselves any favors by not calling balls and strikes. I do see a few areas of concern. One is just as we've often seen in the past, the way the information wars come out, I fear, I believe that Hamas, PIJ, Hezbollah and Iran are going to believe that human shields pay off. I believe that they're going to be more incentivized than ever to employ human shields, both in Gaza and if it comes to it in Lebanon. I also believe that one of the key takeaways from Tehran and Hezbollah will be to get as many of these precision-guided munitions as possible, as quickly as possible.



So, I believe we're going to see an escalation into Iran's PGM campaign in trying to get those capabilities into the hands of Hezbollah in Lebanon as quickly as possible.

Then I believe there are probably some folks who believe that there might be new opportunities because of what they're seeing on the far left to try to separate American support from Israel by demonizing Israel, by using these human shields and then the last thing is just I worry that Iran—

Hamas, and Hezbollah may, in the future, try to weaponize Israeli citizens of Arab descent as an additional tool in their terror against Israelis. So those are three or four areas where I do have some concerns. I know that Israelis are tracking this, and I'm sure the enemies of the United States and Israel are tracking this too, but I think we have to be honest that, at least from my perspective, there are some concerns here.

MAY: Lahav, you should weigh into this a little bit, because I do think one thing that Hamas and Iran's rulers can take satisfaction from is in pitting Israelis against one another. And it seemed to have a recent years that Israeli Arabs, also you could call them Israeli Palestinians, they have citizenship, they have rights, not only that Arabs and Muslims don't have in any other Arab or Muslim country in the Middle East, but in this case, they were in cities that are integrated, like Haifa, like Lod. There were fights between Islamist Israeli Arabs and Israeli Jews, and that's got to be a concern. It comes at a time when relations seem to be getting more pragmatic and productive, in many ways, unless I'm mistaking that.

HARKOV: They talk about fights between extremists on the Jewish and Arab side as if there's an even amount. But the truth is that Israeli Arabs were rioting in mixed cities all over the country, and then there were a handful of cases of Jewish extremists fighting back. If you look at the number of vandalized, burnt synagogues, cars, and homes, far more of them belonged to Jews than Arabs, many times over. In any case, it is a really sad state of affairs because as you said, this does look like a time where coexistence was flourishing, especially in the political sphere. Now, this tension may make that more difficult to build coalitions with the Israeli Arab parties, which would hopefully send a positive message throughout society, not just in the Knesset.

The hope is that it's a vocal minority – It is a vocal minority, it's not just the hope, and that the general public will continue to want this strive for coexistence. That being said last week, there was a general strike of Israeli Arabs that many participated in, many more than had participated in the riots and they were in identification or in support of the rioters. So, it's a disconcerting situation and as you said, Hamas sees it as a victory that what they call the 1948 Palestinians joined the fight. Israel needs to reclaim its sovereignty within Israel. There's a lot of these places where the policing is really bad, the crime rate is really high, and Israeli Arabs themselves complain that the crime rate is really high and that's where some of the worst rioting was. There is a very high crime rate and very high rate of illegal weapons going around. The government needs to wake up and actually deal with these internal issues, because it's bad enough when they were only hurting Arabs. That should have been reason enough to deal with the issue.

MAY: Right. Jon, let me go to you, because I know you have some thoughts on this, and we're going to be wrapping up in the next few minutes. Just keep that in mind, everybody. Go ahead.

SCHANZER: Sure. Just a couple of things on this particular issue. The one thing that I would note just to start is that all of the senior Israeli officials that I talked to during the course of the conflict, they were prepared for just about everything that Hamas threw at them including the massive salvos, the UAVs, the underwater unmanned vehicles, all of the surprises, the Metro tunnels. All that stuff the Israeli military was prepared for. They were not prepared for the riots. They



did not see that coming. It seems like this was the one contingency that they hadn't thought of, that there would be a home front problem that came along with this.

Now, I will say the Israeli police did an incredible job in responding to this. The chief of police, a guy by the name of Kobi Shabtai, in my opinion, was probably one of the heroes of this conflict. He vowed to crack down on anyone who was taking the law into their own hands, who's using violence for political means. He said, "I consider people on both sides to be terrorists if they're engaging in this kind of activity." I think that kind of rhetoric was really important for Israelis to hear, because, of course, they felt like their whole country was coming under siege and tensions were running high. I do agree with Lahav that the majority of the violence did come from the Arab sector, but there were definitely Israelis trying to take matters into their own hands and I think the police did a really good job of mitigating those tensions and making sure to restore order.

Then, look, there's one other question that I would just pose, and I don't know the answer to it, but what we can say is this. Coincidences don't happen too often in this part of the world during conflict, right? So, if you start to see rockets flying out of Gaza, and then you begin to see these kinds of riots taking place in Arab Israeli towns, to me, that looks coordinated. Now, the question is, who would have coordinated this? How could this have happened? The one thing that we have been watching for the last couple of years, our colleague, Aykan Erdemir, our Turkey watcher at FDD, he's been noting how Turkey has been doing a lot of outreach in Jerusalem, among Islamist groups in particular, really trying to whip up anti-Israel sentiment among the local population, working actually hand-in-hand with some of the Islamist legislators within the Knesset, as well as a lot of the municipal elected officials.

So, there are concerns potentially about having a hidden hand, a state sponsor for what we saw. We don't have proof yet for this, but it is something that I guarantee you that we will be looking into as the dust begins to settle and calm begins to return to Israel.

MAY: Brad, we're going to wrap up. Do you have any last thoughts on this that you want to make sure to get in?

BOWMAN: Thanks, Cliff. No, I think Jon covered it. Well, I would just say, and Jon covered the ceasefire issue really well with his five points. The one thing that frustrated me in the latter days of the 11-day period was some of the discussion we saw here in the United States and the discussions surrounding the ceasefire. I just think it's important for Americans to remember how we felt after 9/11. After 9/11, we were going to go to the gates of hell to make sure that that didn't happen again, and we traveled. Indeed, we did. We traveled around the world to Afghanistan to make sure an attack like that wouldn't happen again.

I just think if you buy what I said earlier about the lack of moral equivalence to these two sides, then I think it's the job of Americans to give Israel the time and space it needs to deprive terrorists of the tools they're trying to use to murder civilians. So, I think there's – One of the key things here, I think, is we have to do a better job of educating Americans of who the combatants are here, the lack of moral equivalence, and that if you want less terrorism, the best way to do that is to deprive terrorists of the means they use to kill civilians.

MAY: I'm going to stop there, but this is to be continued. Lahav, Jon, Brad, thanks for your insightful analysis today, and we'll be listening and reading you over the days ahead. In the meantime, thanks for talking to us, and let me say thanks to all of you for listening to *Foreign Policy*.