

Israel's War with Hamas 2014: Part 1 – The Prelude

by Jerry Gordon and Lisa Benson (August 2014)



IDF Operation Protective Edge in Gaza, July 2014

July 27, 2014 marked the end of Ramadan, the Muslim religious period. It was the 20th day of Israel's Operation Protective Edge, the third attempt in seven years to stifle Hamas' rocket war against the Jewish nation. Israel had exchanged land for peace in August 2005 by unilaterally withdrawing 9,000 Israelis from the former Gush Katif settlement in Gaza. Hamas' overthrew the Fatah-PL0 in 2007 following its victory in the Palestinian Legislature elections in 2006 gaining control of Gaza. From 2006 to the July 8, 2014 – the start of Operation Defensive Shield – Hamas and terrorist partner, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), launched over 10,000 rockets indiscriminately against Israeli towns and cities.

The latest conflict erupted on July 8, 2014 following the discovery of the bodies of three Jewish yeshiva students on June 30th executed by two Hamas operatives near Hebron on the West Bank. Israel had begun a massive manhunt for these Jewish teens kidnapped on June 12th while hitchhiking home. Several hundred Palestinians including Hamas sympathizers and leaders were rounded up by IDF and the General Security Service or Shin Bet. This [failed kidnap hostage operation by Hamas](#) was the spark that launched the cycle of rocket violence and ground incursions in Operation Protective Edge.

Prior to the start of this third conflict the IDF had estimated Gaza held upwards of 11,000 rockets and missiles. So far, Hamas and its terrorist Partner PIJ have launched more than 2,507 rockets, and mortars, 1004 since the ground incursion into Gaza began on July 17th. To date the [Israeli human toll](#) in Operation Protective Edge, 43 IDF soldiers and three civilians. That is in contrast to the more than 1,047 [Palestinians killed](#) and more than 6,000 wounded, among them several hundred Hamas and PIJ fighters.

A hitherto undetected intricate network of 30 tunnels had been excavated under the Israel Gaza frontier in an evident attempt to capture Israeli civilians in adjacent Kibbutzim. US Intelligence sources estimated there could upwards of 60 such tunnels. The Hamas tunnel strategy was akin to the 2006 capture and five year imprisonment of former IDF sergeant Gilad

Schalit. Schalit was released on October 11, 2011 in a lopsided exchange for 1,027 Palestinians prisoners.

On July 16, 2014, a Hamas suicide commando squad was detected trying to reach a kibbutz near the Kerem Shalom crossing. The Hamas commando team was attacked by an IAF drone with a missile sending survivors scattering weapons and scampering back into the tunnel entrance. That was the trigger for the launch of the IDF ground incursion into Gaza the following day. The IDF Golani, Givati and Nahal brigades in Gaza have found tunnels inside homes, schools and mosques. They were booby trapped and mined with IEDs and loaded with caches of weapons.

According to an *Algemeiner* [report](#), the Netanyahu Security Cabinet learned that Hamas was going to send hundreds of suicide commandos on the Jewish holy day of Rosh Ha Shanah in 2014 in a mega version of 9/11. That stunned the military planners in the pits of the Ministry of Defense in Tel Aviv.

They should have known that was inevitable. Former US Marine Corps Commandant, Gen. James T. Conway, recounted in a *Wall Street Journal*, [op-ed](#) , after a tour that he and other retired US flag officers had made on May 1, 2014 of “a 3 mile long tunnel reinforced with concrete, lined with telephone wires, and included cabins ..useful for holding hostages. The tunnel was located less than a kilometer from an Israeli kindergarten.”

[Operation Cast Lead](#) in 2008-2009 lasted 22 days ending on the day of first inauguration of President Obama, January 20, 2009. It involved a limited ground incursion by elite IDF units directed at routing out rocket caches, firing positions and Hamas and PIJ fighters. [Operation Pillar of Defense](#) ended in less than eight days on November 21, 2012 as a result of a cease fire brokered with Israel and Hamas by Egyptian President Morsi, a former Muslim Brotherhood leader and supporter of Hamas. That operation witnessed the first deployment of the [Iron Dome system](#) developed by Israel after the 34-day 2006 Lebanon War with Hezbollah during which hundreds of rockets hit Israel's north. Iron Dome batteries deployed in 2012 demonstrated increased proficiency intercepting rockets from Gaza that had begun to reach suburbs of Tel Aviv. By the 20th day of the current conflict, the Iron Dome batteries intercepted 492 rockets, 87 of these following the start of the ground incursion. Those long-range Hamas rockets as well as mortars and other arms were supplied by Iran, despite Israel's navy intercepting shipments on the high seas.

More was yet to come.

In March 2014, Israeli naval commandos [intercepted](#) a Panamanian-flag vessel, the Klos-C ,

bound for Port Sudan. After boarding and the directing the vessel to the Red Sea port of Eilat, more than 43 Syrian made M-302 rockets with a range of 150+ kilometers were uncovered. Additionally they found, stashed under sacks of flour, large stocks of 120 mm mortars and hundreds of thousands of rounds of 7.62 mm ammunition. Once again, Iran's Quds Force was behind the shipment. This was a game changer as those M-302 rockets would threaten more than 80 percent of Israel in the current Operation Protective Edge.

During the first 20 days of this current conflict there have been several cease fires offered and rejected by Hamas and Israel. The latest is proposed a UN 24-hour pause scheduled for the 21st day of the conflict coinciding with the Muslim feast of [Eid of Al Fitr](#), breaking the fast of Ramadan. Israel rejected the latest cease fire offer. President Obama in a [call](#) to Israeli PM Netanyahu pressed for an immediate, unconditional cease fire. After being extended, the latest pause ended at midnight, Saturday, July 26, 2014, despite being breached by Hamas rocket and mortar fire.

The first cease fire was offered by Egypt's newly elected President, Abdel Fattah El-Sisi. El-Sisi, as Egypt's Defense minister had overthrown President Morsi in July 2013 and was no supporter of Hamas. He ordered Egyptian security forces to close the Rafah border with Gaza sealing many of the tunnels through which weapons had been smuggled and much of the cash economy of Gaza was conducted. According to Egypt, 13 tunnels have been destroyed during the current conflict. That first cease fire offer had been approved by Israel, but rejected by Hamas as its demands for re-opening the border with Egypt and lifting the Israeli blockade of Gaza were not part of its 10-year deal for a *hudna*, or cease fire in Arabic. There were brief humanitarian pauses negotiated by the UN and Red Cross to deal with recovery of the dead and wounded. These were breached by Hamas with rocket and mortar attacks.


While Israel had the support of the US Administration, nevertheless, members of the EU have expressed concern about the spike in civilian casualties. That is a moral dilemma posed by the comparative toll of civilian casualties. Hamas' deliberate strategy of using civilians as human shields has caused casualties, despite IDF warnings for civilians to leave targeted areas. As Israeli PM Netanyahu has frequently stated, "Israel uses missiles to defend its people, while Hamas uses people to defend their missiles." *Al Jazeera* reporting on the demographics of Palestinian casualties noted that more than 70 percent were males between the ages of 18 and 44, possibly Hamas and PIJ fighters. As for children killed or maimed in the current conflict, *Tablet Magazine* [cited](#) a 2012 Report by The Institute of Palestine Studies stating that "At least 160 children have been killed excavating the tunnels, according to Hamas officials." The humanitarian crisis arising from Israel's and Egypt's blockade and the

rocket and tunnel war in Gaza is reflected in themes propounded by Hamas' media minders that Western news representatives report; the deaths and injuries to hundreds of defenseless women and children. The latest example of that was the news that 16 were killed at an UNWRA school-refuge center in Beit Hanoun from alleged IDF tank fire. That was disputed in a *Wall Street Journal* [report](#) citing IDF spokesperson Lt. Col. Peter Lerner who indicated that based on military sensors it could have been from Hamas rockets that have fallen in the vicinity. Israel still screens and permits the entry of truckloads of basic humanitarian supplies at its southern Kerem Shalom crossing in Gaza, despite being a target of Hamas and PIJ rockets and mortars.

Secretary of State Kerry was dispatched in late July 2014 to begin a new round of shuttle diplomacy between Cairo, Ankara and Qatar endeavoring to find some leverage with Hamas to obtain a longer cease fire. His latest attempt as of this writing was rejected by Israel as the offer he put on the table simply reiterated Hamas' previously rejected terms. Those terms proposed by Hamas were based on the November 2012 cease fire agreement. An agreement the Administration used to encourage Israel to relent to the shipment of cement, steel and equipment for reconstruction in Gaza. This reconstruction was funded by \$405 million from Qatar, a Hamas supporter. Israel's fears about diversion of those resources were confirmed in the discovery of the elaborate fortifications and tunnel network. Kerry returned to Washington via Paris, where he met with foreign ministers from Turkey, Qatar, France the U.K. and the EU foreign relations commissioner, without the likelihood that further mediation between the warring parties could yield an agreement to return to calm.

Unlike the two prior Israel – Hamas conflicts, Israel has the tacit support of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and a number of other Arab league countries, as they also wanted Hamas finished. These Arab states, nominal allies of the US in the Middle East, were vitally concerned with the rising threat of the Islamic State (IS). IS has declared a Caliphate after conquering large swaths of Syria and Iraq in a blitzkrieg during which it acquired billions in funds, oil resources and vast warehouses of captured US and Russian advanced weapons.

Against this background, the Lisa Benson show convened an interview on July 17, 2014 with Dr. Jonathan Schanzer, Vice President for Research at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and Shoshana Bryen, Senior director, Jewish Policy Center, both of Washington, DC. The ground incursion phase of Israel's Operation Protective Edge began shortly following the interview.

 **Benson:** Good afternoon America. Welcome! Thank you for being with us today. This is Lisa Benson, your host for the Lisa Benson Radio Show for National Security matters. Today we have breaking stories for you and I thank you for joining us. from across America, Israel and

Europe. Week after week this broadcast brings you the intelligent, accurate and measured response to the urgent matters regarding national security and foreign policy. We are here to help you become better informed so you can work with us as a member of the National Security Communication Task Force of America to forge strong national security policies to protect the American people, American homeland and safeguard our closest ally, Israel. We have exceptional guests with us today and my co-host and co-producer of this show Jerry Gordon, a former Army Intelligence Officer and a prolific writer and researcher.



Gordon: Glad to be back.

Benson: Glad to have you. And also with us today Shoshana Bryen, are you there?



Bryen: I am here.

Benson: It is a great measure to meet you Shoshana. You have more than thirty years of experience as an analyst of U.S. Defense Policy and Middle East Affairs. You have run programs and conferences with American military personnel in various countries. Shoshana Bryen is Senior Director of the Jewish Policy Center in Washington, DC. Also with us today from the Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD), is Dr. Jonathan Schanzer. Welcome Jonathan.



Schanzer: Thank you very much.

Benson: You are the Vice President of Research and you, Cliff May and others at FDD are doing tremendous work as a think tank in Washington DC.

Dr. Schanzer, we understand that PA President Mahmoud Abbas, Israel and Hamas delegation are in Cairo. Why they are all in Cairo and what might be the breaking story today?

Schanzer: Lisa, the reason why they are all in Cairo is that Egypt has long held the role of cease fire broker. Of course this was the role of Hosni Mubarak during his time in office. He was of course toppled in 2011 and then we had Mohammed Morsi come in from the Muslim Brotherhood and he actually was able to successfully broker a cease fire in November 2012. Now we have a new leader in Egypt, Abdel Fattah el- Sisi. The ties between Sisi's regime and the United States have been strained. We of course moved to cut funding to Egypt, much of that has been restored. Nevertheless the ties are not as strong, but more importantly Sisi sees himself as an enemy of Hamas. He has been trying to weaken Hamas and it is for that reason I believe that the cease fire that Egypt tried to broker failed. The big story that we are hearing right now is that the United States could be reaching out to alternative brokers. By that I mean they could be reaching out to Qatar and Turkey. These are two significant sponsors both financially and politically of Hamas. If the United States does go that route it would be rewarding terrible behavior on the part of these allies who have been more like frenemies.

Benson: That is the breaking story today.

Gordon: Shoshana, why did Hamas launch this latest rocket blitz against Israel and reject the originally Israeli approved and Egyptian sponsored cease fire,?

Bryen: The first rockets were launched while the IDF was engaged in the West Bank dealing with the three kidnapped teens and arresting Hamas operatives on the West Bank. It was probably a distraction.

The kidnapping itself was a failure. It was supposed to be a kidnapping for ransom, like the Shalit kidnapping for which Hamas received more than 1,000 prisoners. However, because Hamas doesn't control the territory in the West Bank as it does in Gaza, it had nowhere to hold the boys while making its demands, so the whole thing was a failure.

Hamas was close to economic and political failure. Egypt has done a pretty serious job destroying the smuggling tunnels from Sinai to Gaza, and the Hamas-Fatah "unity government" wasn't providing the cash infusion that Hamas thought it was going to get. The US, in fact, blocked a very large financial transfer from Qatar to Hamas that was intended to pay back salaries to Hamas government employees. That was a big blow. Hamas knows only knows one way to generate large scale approval and perhaps income from the Muslim world and that is by attacking Israel.

As far as not agreeing to the cease fire, Hamas doesn't expect to win a war with Israel. It doesn't need to win a war. It needs only to remain alive and kicking when Israel stops shooting. Hamas is going to continue to fight until it loses enough assets to make it painful – which hasn't happened yet. And remember, Hamas is not really playing to the West. Hamas doesn't care that the West is generally supportive of Israel in this case – the assumption is that with more Palestinian casualties, the West will eventually turn on Israel anyhow. And much more than it needs American or European approval, Hamas needs the continuing support of Iran, Turkey, and Qatar and it would like to get back in the good graces of Syria. Those considerations lead it to continue to fire at Israel, reject the West, and reject Egypt, which, as Jonathan rightly says, is an enemy of Hamas these days. There are Egyptians today not-so-secretly hoping Israel will decimate Hamas.

Benson: Dr. Schanzer it appears that Hamas is riven with divisions. Can you expand upon that?

Schanzer: First of all I think that el-Sisi did not prove to be an exceptional broker to be very fair. The Egyptians neglected to let Hamas know that there was a cease fire deal on the table and that was one of the reasons, why Hamas rejected that cease fire. They just didn't feel that they were given the respect that they should have been afforded. I think the kind of broader sentiment that needs to be looked at is the fact that this military- backed regime in Egypt does not like Hamas. Hamas does not like it and so it's very reasonable to say that there is just such bad blood between them that there is no way that the two of them are going to come to any kind of an agreement. What Hamas wants is for their allies to broker this agreement which would imply that they would get a better deal. It would imply that they would be treated more fairly but more importantly it would give these two countries Qatar and Turkey an opportunity to take a victory lap for having played a crucial role in ending the conflict. Khaled Meshaal is the head of Hamas' political bureau based in Qatar. The Qataris give Hamas four hundred million dollars last year. Then you have in Turkey, a Hamas operative who is suspected of having planned and plotted the kidnapping and murder of those three teens in the West Bank. He is based in Ankara; these are the people that they are talking about right now as brokers of a cease fire.

Gordon: Shoshana, did the U.S. Senate passing funding for Israel's Iron Dome System, influence Secretary Kerry's strong statement against Hamas following the rejection of the cease fire offer?

Bryen: No actually I don't think so Jerry. It's a "nice to have." Democrats on the Hill have always been supportive of Israel's Missile Defense System. The Obama administration has cut funding for Israel's missile systems every year, and every year the Democrats join the

Republicans in putting the money back in and adding to the pot for Iron Dome. So this funding doesn't change anything; it's more of the same. The President and Secretary Kerry have figured out that they cannot support Hamas. It doesn't matter what happens on the Hill. The fact that Hamas is already on the terrorism list counts. The fact that Abbas has not supported Hamas in this current business counts – Abbas is the most important Palestinian for the Administration even if he is not necessarily the most powerful. Iron Dome is extremely important to Israel. I'm slightly disturbed Lisa to hear that there are Israeli's that think that it's OK not to go to the shelters. I would hope that people would go to the shelters anyway because although Iron Dome has been upwards of 90% effective in shooting down rockets, but it can't get them all. It won't get them all and so people should be very cautious about assuming that it's 100% failsafe.

Benson: Shoshana could you inform our listeners what the Jewish Policy Center does?

Bryen: The Jewish Policy Center is a non-profit think tank which works to spread certain messages inside the American Jewish community – specifically messages of support for strong American defense capability, close U.S./Israel relations, small government, low taxes and independent thinking.

Gordon: Jon, Secretary Kerry announced from Vienna that the P5+1 talks over Iran's nuclear program is running into real problems. What are those problems and how difficult is it going to be to extend those discussions and would the U.S. Senate reconsider sanctions legislation?

Schanzer: The problems have always been that Iran has a nuclear program that it doesn't want to give up. The United States has been asking nicely for the last six months for Iran to basically shut down the components of its nuclear program that would allow it to affectively make a dash for a bomb including the heavy water reactor. This includes some of the enrichment facilities, and the military dimension of the nuclear program. All of these issues have come up time and time again. The Iranians insist they have a right to enrichment and components of their nuclear program. The problem of course is that what they are saying is they are right. That effectively keeps them in the game and would allow them to make a nuke. Thus, we have reached an impasse. The six month time period as stipulated by the Joint Plan of Action signed back in November 2013 is about to come to an end. It has been extended for another six months. The question is whether the United States and the other five world powers are prepared to give Iran additional sanctions relief and this is deeply concerning. They have already given them seven billion dollars in sanctions relief for merely a pause in their nuclear development program.

Benson: Jon and Shoshana, where do you think this Administration are going and why are they doing this?

Schanzer: The Administration is desperate for a deal. The Administration really does not want to see Iran go nuclear on its watch. Rather than squeezing the Iranians and putting more sanctions on them and, the approach of the Administration has been to invite Iran to the table. Make them partners in their own disarmament and give them sanctions relief as a deal sweetener. The problem with this logic is the stronger Iran's economy gets the less leverage that we have with Iran. I think that this has been a misguided strategy and one that we may all be paying for very soon.

Bryen: In this corner folks we have Saudi Arabia. We have Israel. We have Egypt and in this corner ladies and gentlemen we have Turkey, Qatar, Russia, China, and Iran. Is that the way it sums up for you?

Schanzer: That's about right for now. I mean it's a bit maybe a bit more complicated than that. That's when you want to put it simply, that's exactly the way it is.

Gordon: Shoshana, we've heard mentioned during this conversation the small gas rich Wahhabist Emirate of Qatar. What kind of a hold does it have on the U.S. Administration for such a small very wealthy country supporting Hamas and other activities including the Muslim Brotherhood?

Bryen: You put your finger on it Jerry. Qatar has money and Qatar funds just about everything that the Washington establishment considers important. It puts money, for example, into the Clinton Foundation. It spends money on American universities, on the purchase of American military equipment and on sporting events. If you watched the World Cup you saw Qatar everywhere in Brazil. Al-Jazeera which is the wholly-owned subsidiary of the Qatar government is considered in Washington to be the equivalent of CNN. By spending enough money, by making itself look moderate it has ingratiated itself into the Washington establishment. American officials tend to look at places like Saudi Arabia and Qatar, which are adversaries to each other, as part of some moderate regional grouping. In fact they are both funders of radical Muslims from Chechnya to Syria to Gaza and beyond. It is however hard to say that out loud when you are the Clinton Foundation and you are taking money or you are the Administration selling Qatar billions of dollars worth of U.S. military equipment, or you are a Washington politician appearing on al-Jazeera. The truth is that they are supporters of radical Islam.

Benson: And that's the whole thing in the nutshell.

Gordon: But they also have been, as both Jonathan and Shoshana know, the conduit through

which turmoil has been spread throughout the region. One only has to look at the Benghazi situation to know essentially that the Obama administration has utilized them in the context of filtering weapons not only into Libya but subsequently into Syria.

Benson: Dr. Schanzer what are the new Jihadist groups in Gaza?

Schanzer: It is actually a very messy landscape. I think most people hear about Hamas which is responsible in large part for what's going on but they are by no means the only ones who were involved. You have the Palestinian Islamic Jihad which is an Iran sponsored organization. You have the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades which has been playing a small but important role as well. This is a splinter faction of Abbas' Fatah which is purportedly moderate and pragmatic. You have something called the Popular Resistance Committee that is involved in some of these rocket firings. There are also Salafi groups. The landscape is huge. There are actually even secular, socialist and communist groups that are involved in some of this activity. Gaza is an extremely dangerous place with lots of very radical ideologies that have run rampant. It is really one of the challenges that Israel will have even if they are able to bring the rocket fire under control. The ideology will live on and this has been the challenge for Israel for a very long time.

Gordon: Jon, Turkey's Premier Recep Erdogan is headed for an executive presidency in an upcoming national election in August. Why do you believe he is a frenemy regarding Iran and support for the Islamic State, formerly ISIS?

Schanzer: We put together report here at FDD back in February. What we found was the Turks had helped Iran evade sanctions to the tune of about twelve to thirteen billion dollars, in a gas for gold scheme. After that, there was a report from the Istanbul Prosecutor's Office showing that there was an additional hundred billion dollars, that Turkey had helped Iran conduct additional illicit transactions. There was a huge amount of money right at the peak of the sanctions that was designed to bring Iran limping to the negotiating table. Instead Iran came in a much stronger position. Then you have what has been going on in Syria where Turkey has an extremely lax border policy. It has allowed for the transfer of weapons, cash and people to go back and forth over these borders. The Al Nusra Front and have ISIS has benefitted. Just about every Jihadi group under the sun has benefitted and then you add to that the fact that Hamas is now based in Ankara. They have at least twelve or thirteen different people that we have been able to identify. The point here is that it looks like Turkey, which is of course a NATO ally and a longstanding U.S. ally, also would appear to qualify as a state sponsor of terrorism. This is something that is unsustainable and we hope that Washington will move on this and call Turkey to account.

Benson: President Obama requested \$3.7 billion in supplemental funding, for immigrant children in the surge on the border. Jerry I have a question for you. What is in the Supplemental appropriations bill for 2015?

Gordon: The supplemental appropriation that you are talking about is really predominantly oriented to provide humanitarian crisis "refugee assistance" including legal assistance and additional administrative law judges for the immigration courts to hold hearings. The strategy here that is being employed by the Obama administration is to take these unfortunate individuals who have come up from Central America. They have been the subject to violence from drug crime syndicates and violence perpetrated in these countries. The Administration's strategy is to treat as asylees almost equivalent to what occurred back in 1980 with the Mariel Boatlift episode with Cuba. Back then 125,000 Cubans arrived on the Florida shore with the presumption that they were going to be given sanctuary. That is essentially a rather sinister aspect of this policy. The other pieces of it are directed at improving the border security operation. That has been a demand by a number of Southern border state governors most especially Governor Rick Perry in Texas.

Benson: My question for you is what is in the Congressional appropriations for the Palestinian Authority?

Gordon: There is \$440 million for the PA, in addition to that there is also the appropriation of \$200 million what is called a donor contribution to the UN Works Refugee Agency (UNRWA). UNRWA administers fifty-eight so-called Arab-Palestinian refugee camps throughout the region including places like East Jerusalem, Gaza and in the West Bank or the disputed territories, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. Hamas rockets have been discovered in UNRWA facilities in Gaza during the current conflict.

Benson: Jonathan is there a unity government or is it a delusion?

Schanzer: There was obviously a unity government and I think the United States Government was reticent to acknowledge the fact that that is exactly what it was. It was formed with the agreement of both Hamas and Fatah and would therefore be illegal according to U.S. law. Nevertheless it appears that the White House found a work around, they found some technical ways of getting around that designation. Fast forward through this recent conflict and it does not appear that this unity government is still in place. Hamas is absolutely maligning Abbas at every given opportunity. They are calling him an Al Khoud Kennedy. Implying that he is more loyal to Israel than to the Palestinian cause. There is no way that this unity government holds and that Hamas stays as part of it. The question then becomes does Abbas still find a

way of taking over components of the Gaza Strip and placing them under the Palestinian Authority? In that case we would have what I would call the Hezbollah model, where Hamas is able to operate with impunity under the umbrella of a weak central authority government. This would still be something that I would be reticent to support as an American taxpayer. We are just going to have to wait and see how this thing shakes out.

Benson: How will this money get to the PA leadership Jonathan, but not to the people? Is that how you see the situation?

Schanzer: Well I feel that way absolutely. A book that I published looked at exactly that on the West Bank. What happens in Gaza we don't know? It's a black hole. Hamas has never been transparent about the way that it uses its funds in the Gaza Strip or elsewhere. In the West Bank the money that we provide has gone down into a black hole. Nobody knows exactly how that money is spent but we do know that a great number of the leaders of the Palestinian Authority have become very wealthy as a result of U.S. taxpayer as well as international donor funds.

Benson: What is the name of your book?

Schanzer: It is called, *State of Failure – Yasser Arafat, Mahmoud Abbas and the Unmaking of the Palestinian State*. It came out in November 2013 published by Palgrave Macmillan.

Benson: Shoshana, where do we go from here? What do you see happening?

Bryen: What do I see? The Israeli government needs to eliminate enough Hamas military capabilities to provide a period of quiet for the Israeli public. Understand that there is no desire in Israel to occupy Gaza, or think that it could eliminate Hamas. It is probably impossible to eliminate Hamas. What the government needs to do to provide the greatest amount of quiet for the greatest amount of time? So far it appears that Israel has eliminated about 3000 of what it believes to be 9000 Hamas rockets. That is not good enough. More importantly than the number of rockets, Hamas appears to have established missile production facilities in Gaza which means it won't be dependent entirely upon smuggling missiles. It is less good at smuggling missiles than it used to be but that matters much less if it is able to produce them inside the Gaza Strip. If Israel could locate those facilities and eliminate them and assure itself that it would take some time for Hamas to restore that capability that might be enough for the Israelis to feel that they have done a good job. However, if the Israelis discovered missile production facilities, for example, in the basement of a very tall building and took it out, the collateral damage would truly be horrendous. It's a very difficult set of decisions so I don't want to second guess the Israeli government. That is never my intention, never my goal, but I would say the government is looking for the best mechanism to assure the

greatest period of quiet, the greatest period of security for the greatest number of Israeli citizens.

Benson: Jonathan, will there be a ground war?

Schanzer: If you asked me earlier this week I would have said that a ground war was unlikely. You have a very cautious Benjamin Netanyahu whose legacy up until now has been that he was an Israeli Prime Minister who was not going to get involved in a war. However, I think that the revelations that Hamas commandos, were coming in through tunnels, not between the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula, but between the Gaza Strip and Israel changed everything.

Benson: It was a game changer wasn't it?

Schanzer: It was.

Benson: Jonathan Schanzer and Shoshana Bryen thank you for your valued insights into this current crisis.

Schanzer and Bryen: Thank you for inviting us.

Gordon: Within hours of this interview on July 17th, the IDF ground incursion in Gaza commenced.

Also see Jerry Gordon's collection of interviews,