



Drexel GPS: Geopolitical Update
Hamas Surprise Attack/ Israel Declares War
10/09/23

The geopolitical landscape shifted in a seismic manner as the Palestinian militant group Hamas launched a multi-pronged surprise attack against Israel originating from Gaza on Saturday. The attack was carried out on the 50th anniversary of the Yom Kippur war which started October 6, 1973, which was between Israel and a coalition of Arab states led by Egypt and Syria. The current attack by Hamas took place as Israelis across the country were engaged in festivities surrounding the holiday of Sukkot.

The scale of this attack by Hamas was massive and involved well-trained militant units infiltrating Israel via a combination of air, land, and sea assets, including the use of paragliders. It represents one of the most significant attacks on Israel in recent history and perhaps, more importantly, one of the most coordinated and well organized.

The death toll in Israel so far is reportedly over a thousand and the retaliatory airstrikes by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) on Gaza as they seek to dismantle Hamas operations will surely be significant. Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu has declared war on Hamas and a full-scale ground assault into Gaza enclaves is certain in the near future. The full impact of this provocation on the Middle East and Israel, and on the entire global geopolitical landscape remains to be seen.

Drexel GPS Assessment:

This is a dynamically fluid and chaotic situation in Israel and Gaza. It appears that one of the top objectives of Hamas fighters was to take large numbers of Israelis hostage to use as human shields and future leverage to prevent/discourage massive indiscriminate airstrikes and attacks by the IDF. The scale of hostages taken along with the carnage unleashed inside of Israel's borders by Hamas is unprecedented.

While much is still unknown, the geopolitical ramifications of this event have yet to play out. The full extent of plausible scenarios could see this conflict spilling far outside the borders of Israel and the Gaza Strip, and escalating quickly.

- The current disagreements in U.S. politics as they pertain to the Speaker of The House vacancy did not contribute to the timing of this attack by Hamas.
- Why? The complexity, coordination, logistics, and sheer scale of this type of operation by Hamas could not have been launched in an opportunistic fashion. This attack was going to happen when it did regardless, and the U.S. House Speaker issue is a coincidence not a precursor.
- Hamas has made a calculation, based on historical precedent, on the high value that Israelis place on prisoners. The massive amounts of hostages taken by Hamas will give pause to Israeli military commanders and politicians to green-light offensive operations. This may turn out to be a miscalculation if, based on a combination of OSINT (open sourced intelligence), social media, and other intelligence methods, it is determined that there is no plausible way to safely rescue the hostages.
- If it is determined that rescue is not a viable option, Israel may deem the hostages unretrievable and cause them to be included in so-called “collateral damage assessments.” It is possible the level, intensity, and scale of a ground-incursion into Gaza to dismantle Hamas would be unprecedented and no quarter will be given to any inhabitant of the targeted areas of operations.
- Iran’s role in this attack by Hamas has been highly suggested but not confirmed. If the Iranian connection is vetted, the response that Israel takes against Iran could be a catalyst for the conflict to spill well outside of Gaza and Israel.
- It remains to be seen how Israel will view Hezbollah’s involvement. Hezbollah is well known to be Iran’s main proxy fighting force and has been actively fighting for Syria. How would it respond to a potential military retaliation by Israel?
- Possible Scenario: The timing of this action reinforces the sentiment that Iran now has no incentive to rejoin any nuclear deal with the United States. In fact, a plausible scenario is that Iran uses this window while Israel deals with the Gaza/Hamas situation to conduct a nuclear test and establish itself as a nuclear power to stave off an Israeli airstrike into a now nuclear-armed Iran.

Sites of Hamas Attacks Into Israel Saturday



Drexel Hamilton will continue to monitor this situation as it develops.

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