



Why Hamas Really Attacked Israel on Oct. 7 | Episode 12

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John Mearsheimer: What happened on October 7th is basically the inmates broke out of the concentration camp. Hi, this is John Mearsheimer. And in this episode, I'd like to explore the deep causes that explain why Hamas attacked on October 7th. We just commemorated the third anniversary of the October 7th attack by Hamas against Israel. And much of the discussion in both Israel and the West, regarding what happened on October 7th, revolved around three questions. What exactly happened that day? Number one. Number two, why is it that the Israelis were caught by surprise? Shouldn't they have known that this attack was coming and headed it off at the pass? And then the third question is, what are the consequences for Israel and for the broader region to include the Palestinians given what happened on October 7th? I would say that those are the big three questions. And the one question that is paid little attention, it's not completely ignored, but it's paid little attention, is what explains the root causes of Hamas's decision to attack on October 7th, 2023. Israel and its supporters have a basic story they tell that says that Hamas, for all intents and purposes, were acting as Nazis, that what happened on October 7th is very closely related to the Holocaust. For example, about 10 days after October 7th, 2023, Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel said that Hamas was the new Nazis. Hamas the new Nazis. Furthermore, there is constant reference to the Holocaust when talking about Hamas and what they did on October 7th. It's frequently said to be the deadliest single day for Jews since the Holocaust. But this is just one piece of rhetoric that goes to great lengths to connect what Hamas did with the Holocaust. And as I said, the Israelis frequently talk about Hamas as if they were the equivalent of the Nazis. So, October 7th is, in the minds of many Israelis, if not most Israelis, a case of genocidal anti-Semitism. And this is a view, by the way, that has been purveyed since October 7th, 2023. As I said, it's a subject that's not talked much about. The question of why Hamas attacked on October 7th. What were the deep causes? It's a subject that doesn't get much attention, and it hasn't gotten much attention since October 7th. And to the extent that the subject is addressed by Israel and its supporters, you get this story about the new Nazis doing something that is intended to represent another Holocaust.

Now, my argument is that this perspective is fundamentally flawed. This is not a sound explanation of the deep causes of what happened on October 7th. And what I want to do in my presentation explains October 7th, explains why Hamas attacked on that fateful day. And

the way I want to proceed is, I first want to talk at a general level about the creation of the State of Israel. I think it's very important to understand how Israel was created, to understand what happened on October 7th. And then after I talk about the creation of the State of Israel, I'll focus laser-like on Gaza and specifically on October 7th. So let me start by talking about Israeli history. The conventional wisdom is that the Zionists began to come into Israel in significant numbers starting in the early 1900s. And they were coming into an empty land. For many years, people made the argument this was a land without people. In other words, it was an area that had hardly any population at all. And it was being occupied or going to be occupied by a people that did not have a land of their own. And of course, here we're talking about the Jews. So the story was for a long time that this was land without a people for a people without land. It eventually became manifestly clear that this was not true, and I'll give you some numbers in a few minutes, but Palestine was filled with Palestinians.

Then the other argument you often heard, and these were arguments that I heard when I was young and I was first learning about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, was the claim that the Zionists who came from Europe into Palestine had good intentions towards the Palestinians, and they wanted to live with the Palestinians in what would effectively be some sort of binational political entity. But it didn't turn out that way because the Palestinians refused to live side by side with the Jews. And the Palestinians undermined what would have been a rather peaceful solution that the Jews intended to make work. So, in this particular story, the Jews or the Zionists who are coming out of Europe are portrayed as the good guys, and the Palestinians are portrayed as the bad guys. And I must say that when I was young and I was taught about what happened in terms of the creation of Israel, it was axiomatic that we were let to believe that the Palestinians or the Arabs in that area were the bad guys, and the Zionists were the good guys. And this was, I think, reflected in a very famous book that I read when I was young, which turned into a movie. And that book was called Exodus by Leon Uris. And then, of course, there was a movie with Paul Newman and Eva Marie Saint, also called Exodus. This book and this movie went a long way toward convincing people like me that the Zionist narrative about what happened in Palestine from the start was the correct one – again, the Palestinians were the bad guys, or the Arabs were the bad guys and the Israelis/Zionists were the good guys.

But what begins to happen in the early 1990s is that a group of new historians emerge in Israel who have access to the records of how Israel was really created. And they begin to write articles and books that tell a very different story about the creation of Israel, a story that is almost completely at odds with the conventional wisdom. And it's very important to emphasize here that it's Israelis, and in many cases American Jews, who are telling this story. It's because they have access to the documents, and they are in a position where they can also talk to all sorts of people who were involved in the creation of the State of Israel. And again, the story that they tell is at odds with the conventional wisdom that like me at the time had in our heads. And of course, moving forward beyond the 1990s, more and more information comes out on how Israel was created. And this, I think, fundamentally alters how most people who pay attention to the region think about the creation of the State of Israel.

So let's talk a little bit about what the Zionist goals were. Moving into the area of Palestine. What they wanted to do was to create a Greater Israel. It was rare for Zionist leaders to articulate in public what their actual goals were, in large part because they were so ambitious. The Zionist leader wanted to conquer a huge chunk of territory in the Middle East and turn it into an Israeli state. Today, we refer to that as Greater Israel. They wanted to create a Greater Israel. They were not interested in living side by side with the Palestinians in some sort of binational state. They wanted an Israeli State that controlled a lot of territory. And the problem, as I said before, was that the territory that the Zionists were moving into was filled with Palestinians. Just to give you a feel for what the numbers looked like: in 1900, when the Zionists were beginning to come into Palestine in reasonably large numbers, that's when they're beginning to come in, 96 % of the population is Palestinian or Arab. Just think about that. The first Aliyah, that means the first wave of Zionists, started to come in in the early 1880s. And many of them come and then leave. And those Zionists in the first wave were really not deeply dedicated Zionists the way the Zionists in the second Aliyah or the second wave were. David Ben-Gurion, for example, who I'll talk more about as we go along, who was of course the founding father of Israel, he comes in during the second Aliyah, or the second wave of Zionist movement into Palestine. And that second wave started in 1904. And those Zionists in that wave are what I would call the really dedicated Zionists. But the key point that I'm trying to make here, because we're talking about the size of the population, is that in roughly 1900, just before the second Aliyah starts, 96 % of the the population in the region is comprised of Arabs or Palestinians. So the argument that this is a land without people for a people without land is obviously dead wrong. Just to give you some more numbers: Israel, as I'm sure all the viewers know, was created in 1948. In 1947, this is the year before the creation of Israel, there were basically 1.4 million Palestinians and roughly 608,000 Jews in Palestine. 1.4 million Palestinians and 608,000 Jews. That means that the Palestinians represent 70 % of the population. 70 % of the population when Israel is created. They were 4 % of the population, the Jews were, in 1900 and the Palestinians were 96 %. Then, by 1947, Palestinians were 70 % of the population, and the Jews were roughly 30 % of the population.

Now, very importantly, the Zionists are going to have to deal with all of these Palestinians. This is a problem from the get-go, and it remains a problem today. You just have to understand that. What you have here is a situation where the Zionists are coming from Europe, and they're basically going to take the land and the homes of the Palestinians away from them and turn them into homes for Zionists and later Israelis. They're going to have to steal the land. It's very important to understand that. Another fact that is worth keeping in mind: when Israel was created, this is in 1948, by almost all accounts, Zionists own 6.6 % of the land. You just want to think about that. Think about Palestine today. Think about Israel today. In 1948, when the state of Israel was created, 6.6 % of land was owned by Zionists or owned by Jews. And as I said to you, they represented only 30 % of the population. So they were going to have to steal that land and they're going to have to do terrible things to the Palestinians to create this State of Israel. There's no way around that. And you want to remember, the Palestinians are going to resist. There's no question about that. And I'll say more about this in a minute. But Zionist leaders fully understand that the Palestinians are

going to resist. And you get the famous Arab Revolt, or you could call it the Palestinian Revolt between 1936 and 1939. And then after Israel's creation, you have the first Intifada, which starts in 1987. You have the second Intifada, which happened in 2000. And by the way, as I'll make clear later on in the talk, what happened in Gaza is another example of resistance. The Palestinians, unsurprisingly, were going to resist this effort by the Zionists and later by the Israelis to steal their land and do absolutely horrible things to them so that Israel could be created.

If you just think about this, think about what's going on here, common sense tells you that there was no way that Israel could be created without creating great crimes against the Palestinian people. How could it be otherwise? You have this land that is filled with Palestinians. They own the vast majority of the land. The Israelis decide that they want to come in, or the Zionists decide that they want to come in followed by the Israelis, they're going to create a greater Israel. They're going to carve out a state that occupies eventually a huge chunk of real estate. And again, common sense tells you that the only way this goal can be achieved is by doing absolutely horrible things to the Palestinians. Now, it's very important to understand that the leading Zionists of the day fully understood the logic that I'm laying out to you. How could it be otherwise? They understood what they were doing. They understood that this was not a land without people. They understood they were going to have to do horrible things to the Palestinians. And I want to read you three quotes that I have. One from Ze'ev Jabotinsky, who was a leading Zionist intellectual, a quite right-wing Zionist, but nevertheless a brilliant man, who fully understood that the Palestinians, or the Arabs, would revolt against what the Zionists were trying to do, and he did not blame them one bit. He fully understood why they would resist the Zionist stealing their land. And this is a quote from Jabotinsky. He says: "Every native population, civilized or not, regards its land as its national home". Just think about that. He understood that for the Palestinians, this was their national home, this was their home, and that the Zionists were going to steal their homes, steal their land, and create an Israeli state on their territory. And of course, he understood that they would resist. David Ben-Gurion, who is the founding father of Israel, the leading Zionist before the state was created, a more important figure than Ze'ev Jabotinsky, for sure – listen very carefully to what Ben-Gurion says. And I'm going to read two quotes from Ben-Gurion: "Why should the Arabs make peace? If I were an Arab leader, I would never make terms with Israel". Notice what he said. He said, "I would never make terms with Israel if I were an Arab leader". He then went on to say, and this is the second quote from Ben-Gurion: "They only see one thing. We have come here and stolen their country. Why should they accept that?" That's David Ben-Gurion, first prime minister of Israel, founding father of the state of Israel, saying, "we have stolen their country". As I said to you, common sense tells you that what Ben-Gurion and Jabotinsky are saying has to be the case. How could it be otherwise? Given the fact that this land was filled with Arabs or Palestinians, and they owned almost all of the land. That's the first part of the story.

Second thing I want to focus on is how did the Zionists and then the Israelis think about dealing with the Palestinians? Now, you want to remember that from the beginning, the Zionists and then later the Israelis have a huge number of Palestinians in their midst. And this

continues to this day. Let's just go back over the numbers. Remember what I said about 1900? In 1900, roughly 96 % of the population was Palestinian or Arab. Then I told you that in 1947, the year before Israel was created, about 70 % of the population is Palestinian. Now, what happens in 1948 is you have a great deal of ethnic cleansing, and Israel ends up with a very small state. This is after 1948. It's sometimes referred to as Green Line Israel, or 1948 Israel. It is a rather small state. And in that small state, as a result of all the ethnic cleansing, roughly 20 % of the population is Palestinian, and roughly 80 % of the population is comprised of Israeli Jews. So you start with the situation with the Palestinians in the larger land representing 96 %. Then by 1947 in the large territory of Palestine, that represented 70 %. But then in this rather small enclave that becomes the State of Israel, there are only 20 %. But then something very important happens: in 1967, in the famous Six-Day War, Israel conquered the Gaza Strip and Israel conquered the West Bank. And you get a situation where today in Greater Israel – and when we talk about Greater Israel here, I'm talking about the Israel that was created after 1948 plus the West bank plus Gaza. Those three areas comprise what I'm calling Greater Israel today. In Greater Israel you basically have a situation today where you have about 7.3 million Palestinians and roughly 7.3 million Israeli Jews. So you have rough equality between Jews and Palestinians inside of Greater Israel. So the point that I'm making here is that from 1900 up to the present, there have been huge numbers of Palestinians in the midst of Israel. And the question is, how do the Israelis deal with these Palestinians? Because you want to remember, going back to what Jabotinsky said and what Ben-Gurion said, it was axiomatic that those Palestinians were going to resist the harsh treatment that the Israelis were guaranteed to dish out. The Zionists understood this from the get-go, and the Israelis themselves understood this.

So, what are the different strategies that you might employ to deal with this large population of rebellious Palestinians? The first solution was articulated by Ze'ev Jabotinsky in a very famous article called "The Iron Wall". Jabotinsky wrote this article in 1923. And "The Iron Wall" was his solution to dealing with the problem. Jabotinsky actually believed that you could use the Iron Wall, which is basically the mailed fist, to beat the Palestinians into submission. This was his belief, that the Palestinians would resist, for sure, but if you beat them mercilessly, they would eventually submit. And then the Israeli Jews could live with the Israeli Palestinians, because the Palestinians would be in a submissive state. By the way, I think that if you listen to what Ben Gurion had to say, he used the word "never". Remember, he said, "I would never make terms with Israel". He said, "If I were an Arab leader, I would never make terms with Israel". So I think in a very important way, Ben-Gurion understood that the Iron Wall was never going to work the way that Jabotinsky intended, that you would never get a final submission. You'd always have an intifada and so forth and so on.

But the Iron Wall was the first way of dealing with the problem. The second way of dealing with the problems is ethnic cleansing. And you remember I told you that when Israel was created in 1948, it ended up with only 20 % of its population being comprised of Palestinians. Just think about that. The Israel that's created, Green Line Israel, which was created in 1948, 20 % of its population is Palestinians. And the reason the Israelis ended up with 20 % of the population being Palestinian is they ethnically cleansed huge numbers of Palestinians from

what became Green Line Israel. The estimates are that they cleansed about 700,000 to 750,000 Palestinians. Many of those Palestinians, by the way, were pushed to Gaza, and many of the people in Gaza today are either people who were pushed out as young children back in 1948, or the descendants of people who were pushed down back in 1948. You got significant ethnic cleansing. But the problem that the Israelis ran into is that after 1967, after 1967 when they get the West Bank and they get Gaza, they go from having 20 % of their population inside Israel, 20 % being comprised of Palestinians, to a world where they have a Greater Israel with a population that is more like 50-50. So in a very important way, the ethnic cleansing doesn't work. And just to get off subject here, what the Israelis are trying to do with regard to Gaza and the West Bank today is ethnically cleanse the Palestinians from the West Bank and from Gaza and push them into either Jordan or into Egypt. But you can see where ethnic cleansing, which is designed to get rid of the Palestinians, is an attractive option for the Israelis. And it was for the Zionists before that. The Zionists talked about expulsion at great length. In private, of course, before 1948. It's hardly surprising, because what you want to understand here is that the Israelis fully understand and the Zionists before them fully understand what they're doing to the Palestinians and that the Palestinians are going to resist.

And then the question becomes, how do they deal with this problem? And as I say, the first way they thought about it was the Iron Wall, which involves beating the Palestinians into submission. The second option is ethnic cleansing, and there are real limits there. The third option is to concentrate the Palestinians' isolated enclaves. In the West Bank, the aim has been to concentrate Palestinians in what is sometimes referred to as bantustans, along the lines of what happened in apartheid South Africa. In other words, you want large chunks of the Palestinian population enclosed in a particular area and in a situation where it's very difficult for them to interact with or coordinate with Palestinians who live in other enclaves or other bantustans. But the idea is basically to create ghettos. Gaza is a perfect example of this. Gaza is basically a huge ghetto. Sometimes it's referred to as an open air prison. Other people, and lots of other people, refer to it as a concentration camp. I think it is basically a concentration camp, as I'll describe here. But what you're doing is you're taking these Palestinians who you have to keep under control – because this is a Jewish state, right? The Israeli Jews run the state, obviously, and they want to do everything they can to keep the Palestinians down. So what you do is you concentrate them in ghettos or in bantustans, and you, in effect, hope that will keep them at bay. But those were the three main solutions.

I just want to say something very quickly about the two-state solution. There are some people who are watching who are probably saying there really was a viable alternative, and that was to create two states, a state for the Palestinians and a state for Israel. And of course, there's endless talk in the West, even today, about the need for a two-state solution. Despite what the conventional wisdom on this subject is, the Israelis have never had any serious interest in a two-state solution. There's some interest, not what I would call serious interest, some interest in the late 1990s when Ehud Barak was the prime minister of Israel. And he and Bill Clinton and Yasser Arafat get together at Camp David. And the conventional wisdom is that they come up with a solution, it's a viable solution for the Palestinians, they now have an

opportunity, a wonderful opportunity for their own Palestinian state, and they of course reject it because their goal is to annihilate all of the Israeli Jews because they of of course are Nazis. So there's no way that the benevolent Israelis who were offering them a state of their own can ever succeed because the Palestinians are evil. This whole story about the two-state solution is not backed up by the facts at all. As I said, the Israelis have never had a serious interest in a two-state solution, and they certainly have no interest in it today. So that's not a viable option. The three viable options that the Israelis have dealt with over time to deal with the Palestinians are number one, the Iron Wall. Number two, ethnic cleansing. And number three, concentrating the Palestinians in bantustans or concentration camps. And this, of course, is what you get with Gaza.

Now, let's talk about Gaza. I've tried to give you the big picture up to now. I want to switch to talking about Gaza. Now, a little bit on the history here. As I said before, the Israelis didn't get control of Gaza until 1967. It's after the Six-Day-War that the Israelis get control of Gaza and they get control of the West Bank. And again, when we talk about creating a Greater Israel, it involves 1948 Israel, plus the West bank, plus Gaza. So they got Gaza in 1967 and they put settlers in Gaza. It is very important to understand that. They put settlers and Gaza just as they put settlers in the West Bank. But what happens is that in 2005, Ariel Sharon, he's then the prime minister of Israel, he pulls the settlers out. And then in 2007, Hamas got elected. They have elections in Palestine. Hamas get elected, and Hamas takes over control of Gaza. That's in 2007. So the broad picture I'm painting for you here is that in 1967, the Israelis got control of Gaza. And remember when I said before that in 1948, when the ethnic cleansing took place, huge numbers of Palestinians were driven out of what became Green Line Israel, and they moved into Gaza. So when the Israelis got Gaza in 1967 it's filled with Palestinians, many of whom had lived in Green Line Israel before they were ethnically cleansed in 1948. But that's 1967. And again, the Israelis put settlements there. Then, as I said, in 2005, Ariel Sharon took the settlers out. And let's talk a little bit about that. The conventional wisdom among Israelis and supporters in the West is that what the Israelis were doing was acting in a very benevolent way, and they were going to give the Palestinians an opportunity to create a state of their own to demonstrate that they could run a sovereign Gaza. This is nonsense, right? There's no evidence to support that. Dov Weisglass, who was Ariel Sharon's principal advisor on security issues and was deeply involved in this decision to pull the Israeli settlers out of Gaza, in 2005, basically said that what they're doing is putting the Palestinians on formaldehyde. And he made it very clear that what they want to do is freeze the political process, to freeze the status quo: we're not interested in talking about giving Palestinians any form of autonomy whatsoever, we've got them in a concentration camp, we've just got our settlers out. And basically, we want to keep them in this concentration camp, and keep them on formaldehyde. That's what we're going to do.

This all changed for the worse in 2007. Because in 2007, Hamas came to power, and this really disturbs the Israelis greatly. So what happened in 2007 is that the Israelis decided that they're going to put a blockade on Gaza. And with this blockade, they're going to put the Gazans on a very strict diet. They're going to give them a minimal amount of calories every day. And you want to understand that the Israelis pay a great deal of attention to how many

calories each Palestinian in Gaza will take in on a daily basis. I know this sounds almost absurd, but this is true. The Israelis, they don't want to starve the Palestinians to death. And Dov Weisglass makes this clear. He says, "we want to give them basically a minimal amount of food, but not starve them to death". This is one of the goals of the blockade. You want to think about what's happening here. And I'm sure that many of the viewers are familiar with the Freedom Flotillas that have tried to get into Gaza in recent years. These Freedom Flotillas that come from countries like Turkey or Greece are designed to bring aid to Gaza, because the people on the Freedom Flotilla are trying to break the blockade because they understand that the people in Gaza barely have enough food to get by. And that's by design. So you see, the first thing that the Israelis did in 2007 is they instituted this ironclad blockade designed to put the Palestinians on a strict diet. Not kill them, but push them to the limit.

Another thing that they do is that they assassinate all sorts of leaders in Gaza. Of course, we know the Israelis today run around the world assassinating people. This was happening in Gaza even before 2007. I remember a very important case when Sheik Ahmed Yassin was assassinated by the Israelis in 2004. Sheik Yassin was one of the founding fathers of Hamas, I believe it was in 1987, during the first Intifada, where he helped found Hamas. He was a quadriplegic who was limited to moving around in a wheelchair, and he was nearly blind, but he was a very important spiritual leader inside of Gaza. But again, he was a quadriplegic bound to a wheelchair, and he was effectively blind for all intents and purposes. In 2004, the Israelis killed him with an Apache helicopter. The story just goes on and on about the assassinations. So you see, what's happening here after 2007, and again, even before 2007, is that the Israelis are assassinating leaders. And then after 2007, you get this wicked blockade that is designed to limit how much food the Palestinians get. The final strategy or tactic that the Israelis use, which is well known, I'm sure, to most viewers, is called "mowing the lawn". Every once in a while, the Israelis will go in and mow the lawn in Gaza. That means that they'll go in, mainly with air power, and they will kill a significant number of Palestinians just to make it clear who's in charge and to make sure that they keep the Palestinians inside that concentration camp called Gaza in a state of submission. There are four major cases of mowing the lawn and I want to talk about two of them. And I want to talk about the casualty levels in the largest two cases of the Israelis mowing the lawn. And I want to compare how many Palestinians were killed in those two operations. One's called Cast Lead, the other's called Protective Edge. I want to talk about how many Palestinians were killed by the Israelis in those two operations and then compare that to the number of Israelis who were killed on October 7th, 2023.

Now, just to start with what happened on October 7th, almost everybody agrees about 1,100 Israelis died on October 7th. And about a hundred nationals from other countries who were obviously associated with the Israelis were also killed. So the number of Israelis is 1,100, and the total number, including these foreign nationals, is 1,200. Cast Lead was an operation, a mowing-the-lawn operation that took place in 2008, 2009. And the Israelis killed 1,391 Palestinians. 1,391 Palestinians were killed in Cast Lead. 1,100 Israelis were killed on October 7th. So very clear that more Palestinians were killed in Cast Lead than Israelis were killed on October 7th. Then we go to Protective Edge. Protective Edge is in 2014. This is the

second big mowing-the-lawn operation. In Protective Edge, 2,203 Palestinians were killed. 2,203 Palestinians. Again, to go back to what happened on October 7th, 1,100 Israelis were killed. In Protective Edge 2,203 Palestinians were killed. That means that more than two times as many Palestinians were killed in Protective Edge as Israelis were killed on October 7th. Really quite remarkable if you think about it. So what's the story that I'm telling you? The story I'm tell you is that in Gaza, the Israelis have basically kept the Palestinians on a starvation diet – number one. Number two, they have assassinated their leaders time after time. And number three, they have engaged in mowing-the-lawn operations, where on two occasions they killed more people than Israelis were killed on October 7th.

This brings us to the whole question of what happened on October 7th. What happened on October 7th is basically the inmates broke out of the concentration camp. Norman Finkelstein likes to refer to this as a slave revolt, or to the equivalent of a slave revolt. He talks about the famous 1831 Slave Revolt in the South, led by Nat Turner. And if you listen to Norman talk, his discussion of the parallels between what happened with that slave revolt and what happened on October 7th is commonsensical. This was basically the inmates breaking out. These were not Nazis. These were people who were bent on murdering Jews because they had views like German leaders did in the Third Reich. There's no similarity here. These are people who, number one, wanted their freedom. I think it's perfectly legitimate to refer to them as freedom fighters. If you think about the conditions that they lived in inside of Gaza, if you think about what kind of hope they had for the future, do you think it is any surprise that they tried to break out, that they tried to change the status quo? I find it hardly surprising at all. They wanted their freedom. They wanted to get out of this prison, just the way Nat Turner wanted to get out of his situation as a slave in the South before the Civil War. That was their first goal. Their second goal, and this is a very important point, their second goal is to get back their land. The truth is Hamas wants their land back. They believe Israel stole their land and they want it back. This should not be surprising. I want to go back and I want to read those two quotes that I read to you before by David Ben-Gurion. And I would implore you to keep these quotes in mind when you think about what Hamas did on October 7th. Here's Ben-Gurion: "Why should the Arabs make peace?" That's his question. "If I were an Arab leader", should we say if I were a member of Hamas, if I was the leader of Hamass, "I would never", underline the word never, "make terms with Israel". Isn't this a good explanation of what Hamas thinks about creating a Palestinian state between the river and the sea? Then to read the second quote that I read to you before from Ben-Gurion: "They only see" – when he says "they", he is talking about the Arabs/Palestinians and here we're talking about Hamas – "they only see one thing. We have come here and stolen their country. Why should they accept that?" Why should they accept that? Well, they don't accept that. And with regard to having stolen their country, you realize there are many people in Gaza who still have the keys to their house inside of Israel that the Israelis took from them, or took from their relatives, in 1948.

So what I'm saying to you here is that what Hamas did on October 7th is hardly surprising, given what the Israelis were doing to them inside of this concentration camp. It's hardly surprising. And when you think about how those early Zionists, people like Ze'ev Jabotinsky

and Ben Gurion, thought about the situation that the Palestinians were in, it's completely consistent with what Hamas did on October 7th. And it's also consistent with Hamas' broader goal of wanting to control all of the territory in Palestine. Now, I fully understand why from an Israeli point of view this is unacceptable. And of course, Jabotinsky and Ben-Gurion made exactly that point. But Jabotinsky and Ben-Gurion understood that the Palestinians were not Nazis. This is not a case of Zionists dealing with Nazis. This was a case for Zionists stealing the Palestinians' land for the purpose of creating a Jewish state. And they, of course, understood that the Palestinians would resist. And that is what Hamas did. So if you really want to understand the deep causes of what happened on October 7th, you should just go back and read what historians have written about the creation of Israel and read carefully about what actually happened on October 7th and what was happening in Gaza before October 7th. It's manifestly clear from the literature that this was a concentration camp. That's no secret here. The Israelis fully understood that this was a concentration camp, where they'd have to go in occasionally and mow the lawn. And again, you want to remember, when people talk about the horrors of October 7th and how many Israelis were killed, that in two of the mowing-the-lawn operations more Palestinians were killed than Israelis were killed on October 7th. And in Protective Edge, twice as many, more than twice as many Palestinians were killed as Israelis were killed on October 7th. And I don't mean to make light of those Israelis who were killed on October 7th for one second, but at the same time I don't want to make light of all those Palestinians that the Israelis have routinely killed over the years and continue to routinely kill.

One final point: It's very important to understand that what Hamas did in terms of attacking into Israel on October 7th was legal according to international law. I'm not talking about the killing of civilians. I'm not talking about what actually happened in terms of the conflict that ensued once Hamas entered into Israeli territory. I'm just saying that Hamas was within its rights, its legal rights, it was okay from the perspective of international law for Hamas to attack into Israel, because Israel was an illegal occupying force in Gaza. And international law says that it is okay, it is legitimate, it is acceptable for the group that is the victim of an illegal occupation to engage in armed resistance. To be very clear here: armed resistance on the part of Hamas was legal. It was acceptable according to international law. That's my final point on this whole subject, and I hope that people, after listening to what I had to say today, about the deep causes that explain why Hamas attacked on October 7th will now go out and read much more about the creation of Israel and the circumstances that existed in Gaza before October 7th, so that you have a better understanding of what caused the tragic events of those days. Thank you very much, and I look forward to our next episode.

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