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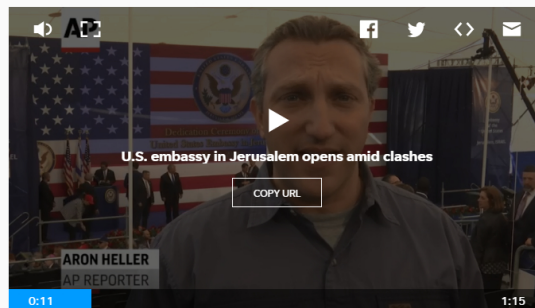
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Embassy move in Israel not responsible for violence: Rozett

Dan Rozett Published 1:47 p.m. ET May 23, 2018 | Updated 3:04 p.m. ET May 23, 2018



Amid deadly clashes along the Israeli-Palestinian border, the new U.S. embassy in Jerusalem opens. AP reporter Aron Heller explains. (May 14) AP



(Photo: SAID KHATIB/AFP/GETTY IMAGES)

Was it the decision of the U.S. administration to move the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem that caused the current violence in Gaza? Was Iran's recent missile attack on Israel, a direct result of the U.S. administration pulling out of the Iran deal? The answers are both no.

Hamas and Iran have been longing for the destruction of Israel decades before any embassy move or Iran deal. The original Hamas Charter, drafted in 1988 states: "Our struggle against the Jews... should be supported by more and more squadrons from this vast Arab and Islamic world, until the enemy is vanquished and Allah's victory is realized."

Even the revised Hamas charter, drafted in 2017 leaves no doubt of the true intentions of this organization: "Hamas believes that no part of the land of Palestine shall be compromised or conceded, irrespective of the causes, the circumstances and the pressures and no matter how long the occupation lasts. Hamas rejects any alternative to the full and complete liberation of Palestine, from the river to the sea."

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A day before a protest planned for May 14, 2018, called "The March of Return" (The March), Gaza Prime Minister Yahya Sinwar said, "We will take down the border (with Israel) and we will tear out their hearts from their bodies."

Given the timing of the Gaza protests, many incorrectly assumed it was about moving the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem. The protests have been ongoing since March, planned months ago to coincide with the embassy move and with the annual protest against Israel's right to exist. The name of the march, The March of Return, has the



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against Israel's right to exist. The name of the march, the march of return, begs the question, return to where? To all of what is now Israel. The embassy move is only an excuse to justify more violence on the part of Hamas.

The same reality applies to the events of the recent exchange of fire between Iranian forces and the Israeli Army. Many attributed this to the U.S. decision to withdraw from the Iran Nuclear deal. It was not.

One wonders, what is Iran doing in Syria, and why is it so close to the border with Israel? Did Iranian forces arrive there overnight? No. Iran has repeatedly stated its goal to destroy Israel, which is one reason why Israel has been so energized about preventing Iran from gaining nuclear weapons. Since declared an "enemy of Islam" and "The Little Satan" after the Islamic revolution of 1979, the destruction of Israel became a priority for the Iranian leaders.

Iran has used the Syrian civil war as an opportunity to flood the region with elite troops, encroaching on the border with Israel. Iran fuels the Hezbollah war machine, whose sole purpose is destroying Israel with more than 150,000 rockets at the ready. Pulling out of the Iran deal was just another issue to capitalize on to attack Israel — this time, directly.

Hamas and Iran are longtime enemies of Israel, determined to bring about her destruction. Flare-ups of violence may be prompted by specific events; however, this does not mean they are caused by the event. Context should not be overlooked.

The embassy move recognizes Israel's right as a sovereign country to choose her capital, as is the right of any other country. The move has not closed the door to negotiations, as assured by U.S. and Israeli officials. Hamas chose to exploit this to pursue more violence against Israel.

The withdrawal from the Iran deal was not the cause of the recent missile exchange between Israel and Iran. The key reason Iran is advancing in Syria is to one day carry out plans to harm and destroy Israel. If Israel does not act, those pursuing violence will continue their aggression until they achieve their aims. Yet, if Israel's enemies put down their weapons today, there can be peace tomorrow. That's the real message from these events.

Dan Rozett is manager, Israel and community engagement, for the Jewish Federation in the Heart of New Jersey. His view represents his own, not that of the federation.

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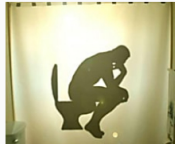
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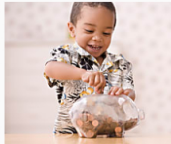
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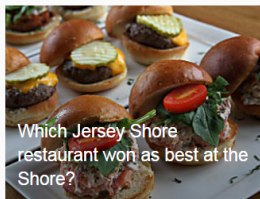
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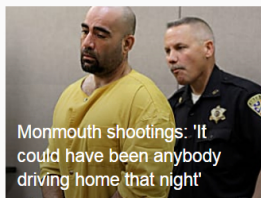
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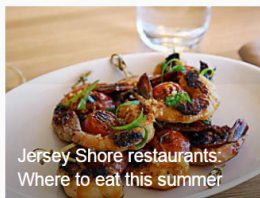
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