

From Tehran to Jerusalem via Gaza: A Hamas rocket's trajectory

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When Israel and the militant Islamic group Hamas agreed to a cease-fire last week, ending 11 days of airstrikes and rocket fire, both sides claimed victory.

So did Iran.

Hamas' patrons in Tehran have shepherded the radical Palestinian organization's weapons program for over two decades. This week they celebrated the recent fighting as evidence of another leap in Hamas' military capabilities.

[...]

None of this would have been possible without Iranian assistance, says Dr. **Raz Zimmt**, an Iran expert at the **Institute for National Security Studies at Tel Aviv University**.

"In the past they certainly used Iranian-made rockets," says Dr. Zimmt. "The trend we're seeing, not just in Gaza, but also with Hezbollah and with the Houthis in Yemen, is that they're moving from buying weapons from Iran to using technology from Iran to manufacture them domestically."

[...]

Until now, Israel's policy toward Gaza has been "to maintain as much quiet as possible" and to prolong the interludes between bouts of conflict, says Dr. Zimmt.

If Hamas restarts its rocket factories, though, the government would have to decide whether "to start a preventive war against Hamas and again expose all Israel to rockets coming from Gaza. Or should we just wait and do nothing?" Dr. Zimmt points out. "This is a very big dilemma in Israel."

Such a dilemma for Israel is an achievement for Iran and Hamas, suggests Mr. Hinz. "They've demonstrated a capability and a willingness to escalate that definitely will influence future decision-making in Israel," he says. "And I think that in itself is quite a victory."

For full article:

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