

a. To which "old battle" does the article's headline refer?

It refers to the hostility between Gaza and Israel, which has gone back for decades, ever since the Israelis settled in Palestine. The Israelis said that the land belonged to them because God had promised it to them. The Arabs replied that the land belonged to them because they had lived there for centuries.

b. What seem to be the hopes underlying Israel's assault on Gaza?

Partly to stop the rocket attacks, but also to weaken the political power of Hamas in Gaza. Unfortunately, the attacks seem to be strengthening the power of Hamas over the people.

c. How would a clear Israeli victory affect the region?

It would mean that Gaza would be occupied by Israel, and would also make Palestinian people in other countries worried about their safety. This could make organizations like Hamas even more powerful in those countries, and lead to more terrorist attacks and more anger towards Israelis. On the plus side for Israel, it could also weaken Iran's power in the area.

d. How would a clear Israeli victory affect the United States?

e. Why does Iran have much at stake in the outcome of the current crisis?

A lot. As they have backed groups like Hamas in the past, the weakening of Hamas will also weaken Iran's power in the area.

f. How likely is it that the Israeli assault will be successful?

It is likely that they will be able to occupy Gaza, but it is even more likely that the act will cause other countries to become unwilling to deal with Israel and even hostile to it.

g. What are some of the divisions in the Middle East that this conflict has highlighted?

The division between Israelis and Palestinians, as Israel has been persecuting Palestinians in its own country for a long time, and now will continue to do so in Gaza.

h. What happened in Lebanon in 1982? How are the Gaza attacks similar?

Israel attacked Lebanon to try and get rid of a terrorist organization and keep its borders secure. But while they managed to get the organization's leader to come to the negotiating table, the attacks also spawned another organization that was just as dangerous as the last one, if not more so.

i. In what ways might the attacks on Gaza backfire?

Even if they take control, Hamas will still survive, build up again, and launch guerrilla attacks against the occupying forces. And also, these attacks may turn other countries that were previously not hostile into enemies of Israel.

j. Why does Mr. Abbas say he will walk away from the peace talks begun by President Bush in 2007?

Because he feels that it is not the wish of the majority of the Palestinian people to make peace with Israel. He doesn't want to get in trouble with his own citizens.

k. What lessons has Israel learned from Lebanon?

I don't what lessons it has learned. It should have learned that attacking terrorist organizations usually just makes them more extreme, and that even if it can defeat them, it often creates new, and even more dangerous, terrorist organizations.

m. In what way is the timing of this renewed battle beneficial?

For the Israelis, it is beneficial because it comes before the inauguration of President Barack Obama, who, although he says he supports Israel in some of its actions, he feels that it is time for a change of policy in the middle east.

n. How will the Obama administration be able to capitalize on the situation in Gaza?

It is likely that the immediate fighting will have ended by Inauguration Day. If so, President Obama will be able to capitalize on the cease-fire to renew a push for a permanent settlement.