



again and again.



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Yet just as assuredly, Israel has not won the war. It received no surrender, and it was pressure by both Biden and Trump that caused Israel to accept a ceasefire involving near total withdrawal from Gaza.

Undeniably, too, Hamas remains in charge of Gaza and will have the chance to regroup. Moreover, Michael Rubin of the *Middle East Forum Observer* believes Israel accepted “an extraordinarily bad deal,” which rewards terror and returns convicted terrorists to the battlefield.

The deal leaves Hamas looking strong and poised to take over the Palestinian West Bank. Rubin says, “By throwing a lifeline to Hamas and allowing it to claim victory, [Israeli Prime Minister] Netanyahu is essentially promoting Hamas in the leadership struggle to succeed [89-year-old Palestinian President Mahmoud] Abbas.”

Can Israel recover from this setback? Can it rejoin the battle to defeat Hamas? Surely, if Hamas overplays its hand and violates the ceasefire—as it likely will—Israel, with Trump’s support, could still emerge the winner. The final question is, what would an Israeli victory look like?

**Israel devastated Hamas.** The IDF has killed some 17,000-20,000 terrorists, reducing Hamas to a guerrilla army with no central command structure as Israel also eliminated almost all its leadership. The once mighty terror organization that invaded Israel on October 7<sup>th</sup> and methodically raped, tortured, burned, murdered, and kidnapped approximately 1,500 mostly Jewish civilians no longer exists.

**Hamas also lost strategically, as its sponsor and allies were severely crippled.** Hezbollah, which joined Hamas’s assault against Israel on October 7<sup>th</sup>, shooting thousands of rockets at the Jewish state, suffered devastating losses after the IDF counterattacked the Lebanon-based Iranian proxy. Like Hamas, Hezbollah lost most of its military capabilities and its leadership, including supreme leader Hassan Nasrallah.

Iran entered the fray in April last year, firing nearly two hundred missiles and drones at Israel, followed by a similar assault in October. But these attacks had little more effect than fireworks as nearly all Iran’s projectiles were intercepted by Israel and its allies. Israel counterattacked, severely crippling Iran’s missile infrastructure and air defenses.

In December, Syrian rebels, taking advantage of Iran’s weakness and that of Hezbollah, quickly overran the forces of dictator Bashar Al-Assad, destroying his regime in just over a week. Thus, within about a year, Israel’s efforts neutralized all but one of Hamas’s allies—the Yemen-based Houthis.

**Top Hamas officials themselves admit the “Al Aqsa Flood” was a disaster for them.** One senior Hamas official told Saudi media, “The Al-Aqsa Flood attack backfired on us, submerging us in a sea of blood and crises.” Late last month, Hamas sources admitted that the IDF successfully neutralized most of their military capabilities in Gaza. Hamas sources speaking with Saudi newspaper *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat* revealed that their fighters in Gaza had to make decisions independently without receiving direct orders from senior command, most of which Israel eliminated.

**Hamas is down, but certainly not out.** The terrorist group is in tatters, but still functioning and still in charge of Gaza. Furthermore, support for the terrorist group remains strong, if not stronger than before October 7<sup>th</sup>. The latest polls show almost two thirds of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza want Hamas to be part of, or even lead, a new Palestinian government. The group remains much more popular than President Abbas’s Palestinian Authority.

**Israel crushed Hamas, but didn’t achieve a decisive victory.** Instead, its leaders grudgingly agreed to a ceasefire under relentless pressure from both Biden and Trump that will require Israel to withdraw nearly all its forces from Gaza and free thousands of terrorists, including hard-core murderers, in exchange for its hostages.

**Israel can still achieve victory.** Indeed, the ceasefire will inevitably fail because Hamas’s overriding aim remains the destruction of Israel. Moreover, Hamas cannot control the actions

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of its individual fighters as its command structure is destroyed. If and when Hamas violates



**Hamas cannot rationally claim victory.** On October 6<sup>th</sup>, Hamas boasted a full-fledged army. Today, its territory has been razed, most of its tunnels destroyed, its terrorist infrastructure crippled and its leadership on life support. Still, Hamas hasn't completely disappeared. If Israel and the U.S. fail to keep a tight grip on Iran's throat or to forcefully rejoin the battle against Hamas, the Gaza terrorists will surely rearm and regroup. In short, Israel faces the choice of decisive victory . . . or a repeat of the same disastrous fate that befell it on October 7<sup>th</sup>.

Please make the point when speaking with family, friends, colleagues—or in letters to the editor—that for Israel to achieve safety and security for its people, its leaders must fulfill their promise to decisively end Hamas's rule over Gaza. Israel—with U.S. support—must deliver a crushing blow both to Iran and its proxies in the global jihad, effectively putting their axis of evil out of business.

If you agree we need to spread this truth, please use your email browser to forward this Hotline issue to fellow lovers of Israel—and encourage them to join us by subscribing to the Hotline at no charge.

Best regards,  
Jason Shvili, Contributing Editor  
Facts and Logic About the Middle East (FLAME)

P.S. Too often, American citizens take comfort in their insulation from Islamist violence roiling the Middle East, as well as cities in Europe. But the jihadists are clear that fighting Jews and Israel is just the beginning. At rallies in Iran—and increasingly in the U.S.—the crowds scream, "Death to Israel, Death to America." They understand that Israel is just the tip of the spear of Western Civilization—because Israel was the birthplace of so many Western values. Today the Jewish state stands as one of the strongest democracies in the world—a defender of liberty and enemy of oppressive Middle East dictatorships and terrorism. I hope you'll agree that we supporters of the Israel-U.S. relationship need to speak out. FLAME's new *hasbarah*—explanatory message—"Israel's War Is America's War"—describes how Israel massively defends United States interests in the Middle East and how Israel represents a roadblock to Islamic expansion worldwide. Finally, it explains why the recent U.S. foreign policy of soft diplomacy and appeasement of Iran has failed consistently. Please review this convincing, fact-based editorial, which FLAME intends to publish to millions—in leading social media, as well as in the *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Tampa Bay Times*, *Denver Post* and *Los Angeles Times*. This piece will also be sent to all members of Congress, the President and Vice President. If you agree that this kind of public relations effort on Israel's behalf is critical, I urge you to [support us](#) with a donation.

As of today, more than 27,000 Israel supporters receive the FLAME Hotline at no charge every week. If you're not yet a subscriber, won't you join us in receiving these timely updates, so you can more effectively tell the truth about Israel? Just go to [free subscription](#).

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