

Hostage deal a major win for Israel, but will Palestinians seize—or miss—another opportunity for peace?

Jacques Gautreaux

Dear Friend of Israel, Friend of FLAME:

Though Hamas has been militarily battered by Israel and pressured by its Arab supporters to release the hostages, the Palestinians may yet again fail to seize the opportunity for peace and eventual autonomy. They seem destined to reject the full Trump peace plan, just as they have rejected countless other opportunities, because their religious “programming,” tragically, fates them to fail.

President Donald Trump’s 20-point peace plan offers the Palestinians a final chance to choose peace with Israel and a path to statehood, of which the hostage deal is just step one.

Though as of this writing, Hamas has released 20 living hostages—a huge breakthrough—it’s far from clear whether Hamas will agree to the other 19 terms of Trump’s plan, especially the group’s total disarmament.

The Palestinians’ history—and particularly that of Hamas—provides abundant evidence of a compulsion to renege on ceasefires and other peace deals with Israel. Indeed, Abba Eban’s 2002 observation that the Palestinians never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity still rings true today.

But no matter what Hamas decides after the hostage release, Israel can claim victory in the Gaza war, having largely disabled the terrorist group and achieved its major goal of bringing the hostages home.

Whatever Hamas chooses going forward, the Gaza War has set back the Palestinian project dramatically—with administration of its territories about to be taken over again by foreign forces.

Now that the hostages are free, assuming that Hamas rejects the rest of the Trump plan—as seems likely—the Palestinian movement will still return to square one, with Israel finishing its military victory and resuming its control over both the Gaza Strip and Judea and Samaria (the West Bank).

The whole outcome represents a tragic, but predictable regression for the Palestinians’—and the world’s—hopes for increasing their independence and sovereignty. This outcome represents the result of nothing more than the Palestinians’ own fateful choices over the last 77 years.

The problem is that peace and freedom are simply *not* in the Palestinians’ DNA—nor is surrender to its mortal enemy, Israel. Rather, they are obsessed with their futile mission to destroy the Jewish state. Even with full freedom to choose, like the scorpion who “must” sting the frog ferrying him safely across a river, the Palestinians have been helpless to their self-destructive “nature” for nearly eight decades.

For this reason, despite all Trump’s (and Netanyahu’s) hopes and determination, the new plan

seems doomed to fail.

The Palestinians' last chance for peace and statehood. Rejecting the Trump deal could open the door for Israel to exercise greater control over both Gaza and Judea and Samaria. Moreover, the Arab states' support of the Palestinians is waning. Arab leaders are more focused on pragmatic self-interest, such as containing Iran and ensuring their own economic prosperity. Thus, if Hamas and the Palestinians reject the Trump plan, Saudi Arabia and other Arab states could normalize relations with Israel regardless of Palestinian interests, leaving the Palestinians further isolated.

Palestinians are hardwired never to accept peace with “infidels.” “Palestine” is considered by many Muslims, especially the Palestinians, to be a perpetual Islamic endowment that *must* be returned to Islam. Hence, their war against Israel is not a political struggle, but a religious one, making it impossible for the Palestinians to accept living peacefully beside a Jewish state.

It's doubtful Hamas will agree to disarmament. One likely deal-breaker could be the plan's insistence that Hamas disarm. Indeed, last week, an umbrella group of Palestinian factions, including Hamas, issued a statement saying “no one has the right to cede the weapons of the Palestinian people.” Indeed, polls indicate that 77% of Palestinians oppose disarming Hamas.

The Palestinians, especially Hamas, have a history of renegeing on ceasefires and other peace offers. Prime example: Rather than exploiting Israel's full withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2005—by building an independent, prosperous state, Hamas instead turned Gaza into a terrorist base from which to attack Israel, initiating several wars and breaking one ceasefire after another. Given this history, it's highly unlikely that the Palestinians, particularly Hamas, will abide by the Trump plan.

Regardless of what Hamas decides, victory belongs to Israel. Most of Hamas's military capabilities are destroyed. Thousands of its terrorists and all its top leadership have been killed. Furthermore, Israel has achieved what some argue was the most important goal of the war—bringing the hostages home. This is, indeed, a great victory for the Jewish state.

The Palestinians will once again be ruled by foreign powers. Just as Palestinians in Gaza and Judea and Samaria were under the control of Egypt and Jordan respectively between 1948 and 1967, they have been at least partially managed by Israel since then. Now, Trump's plan envisions turning over their administration to U.S., Arab and other foreign technocrats. To emerge out from under foreign control, the Palestinians would have to agree to and achieve a double miracle—substantial deradicalization of its culture . . . and dramatic reform of its political institutions.

If Hamas rejects the core of the Trump plan, the Palestinians risk a return to full Israeli control. Israel will doubtlessly finish Hamas on its own and put Gaza, once again, under full military control. Israel could also dissolve the Palestinian Authority or take from it control of the increasingly lawless Judea and Samaria territories, leaving most if not all these lands under complete Israeli jurisdiction, as they were before the Oslo Accords.

The Palestinians have only themselves to blame for their setbacks. They have rejected multiple U.S. and Israeli proposals for peace and statehood, proving themselves incapable of abandoning their compulsion to eject the Jews, let alone forming the institutions necessary for a functional, sovereign state.

For these reasons, Trump's plan is likely doomed to fail. Tragedy happens when flawed actors make bad choices—choices *compelled* by their “fate.” Unfortunately, Hamas and the Palestinians generally always choose to continue their fight against the Jewish “infidels,” — dooming them to hardship and tragically restricting their opportunities for autonomy.

Please make the point when speaking with family, friends, colleagues—or in letters to the editor—that as long as the Palestinians believe they are religiously compelled to fight the Jews, they will continue to lose . . . and continue to suffer.

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,
James Sinkinson, President
Facts and Logic About the Middle East (FLAME)

P.S. Surely you've recently read of some celebrity, politician, radical student, foreign head of state or media pundit slander Israel with the "Gaza genocide" lie. Many who spread this lie are ignorant, but most are anti-Israel haters. They care nothing for the truth. The tragedy is, when they utter the Gaza genocide falsehood, too few knowledgeable people—and virtually no media—stand up to refute it. Indeed, when you share the simple facts, the genocide lie crumbles. Upon learning that Israel conducts its war against Hamas terrorists with the highest ethical standards—and that *nothing* Israel does in Gaza fits the definition of genocide—fair-minded people quickly see through the lie. I hope you'll agree that we supporters of the Israel-U.S. relationship need to speak out. FLAME's new *hasbarah*—explanatory message—"[Facts Shatter Gaza Genocide Lies](#)"—describes what genocide is *and is not* and proves factually that Israel's tactics in the war are ethical and righteous. It also reveals demographic data showing that the Palestinian population in Gaza is actually increasing. Finally, it notes that those who spread the Gaza genocide lie fit the classic definition of antisemites. Please review this convincing, fact-based editorial, which FLAME is about 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.

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