

Bret Stephens, Thomas Friedman, and the Future of Gaza and Hamas

by [By Gerald A. Honigman](#) (March 2025)



Bret Stephens, the far more knowledgeable and tuned in *New York Times* opinion piece contributor regarding the Middle East (despite Thomas Friedman's own self-anointed opinion about himself) recently penned a piece dealing with what should be done with Gaza in light of the non-stop barbarism and depravity emanating from it courtesy of Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and just plain old civilian Arab butchers who gleefully partook in the Simchat Torah, October 7th, 2023 bloodlust and posted photos of their handiwork on the internet.

I knew of these infuriating details before, but reading Bret's account made me even more sick to my stomach knowing that these wanton murderers will likely live to murder and terrorize yet again.

Paraphrasing his account...

On Saturday, Hamas paraded three skeletally thin Israel hostages for a propaganda video in which they were forced to thank their captors [...] One of the hostages then only learned, upon his release from his Israeli receptors, that his wife and daughter were savagely killed on October 7, 2023. He was cruelly led to believe by his captors that they were still alive and waiting for him.

Here's Bret's [op-ed](#) followed by my own related [analysis](#) including Hamas's graphic photos illustrating the nature of the subhuman beast Israel faces on its borders.

My one big problem is that his plan puts too much trust in "ordinary" Arab Gazans who participated in the Hamas bloodlust, aid and abet its terror campaign against innocent Israeli civilians, and elected Hamas to power in the first place two decades ago with Jimmy "Apartheid Israel" Carter overseeing the election—knowing full well that Hamas's charter calls for the total obliteration of both Israel and Jews everywhere.

There are very few "innocent" Arabs in Gaza.

I like Bret Stephens, but he's just a bit too naive here. His counterpart at *NYT* had his comeuppance this past High Holiday season, and was left stunned, stuttering, and speechless after my serendipitous "bashert" [encounter](#) with both him and one of the main architects of the horrific Oslo Peace (of the grave)

Accords several decades ago, President Clinton's point man on the Middle East, Denis Ross.

Back to the present...

If Israel is to totally withdraw from Gaza (BIG mistake: it needs a permanent 8-10 mile wide buffer zone in the border area), a long term Multinational Peacekeeping and Observer Force like that which has been in place in the Sinai replacing the UN's pathetic and useless peacekeeping force which withdrew as soon as Nasser told them to, allowing him to amass 100,000 troops, tanks, etc. right up to the '49 armistice line. with an extremely vulnerable 9-15 mile wide Israel.

Such an adequately equipped and manned force needs to be placed in strategic areas of Gaza, like the Philidelphi Corridor and Raffa, etc. Consider replacing the UNIFIL collaborators with Hizbullah in Lebanon with such a force as well.

Keep in mind that Gaza had a rich, ancient Jewish history long before the 7th century C.E. Jihadi Arab onslaught coming out of the Arabian Peninsula. It was indeed part of the original 1920 Mandate of Palestine until Egypt illegally grabbed it upon attacking a minuscule, resurrected Israel in May, 1948.

I would forever be blessed with knowing that I made my own earthly debut during the very same week as the rebirth of the nation of my People—President Harry S. Truman's birthday, May 8, 1948.

Truman had to fight the antisemites (historical archives indeed confirm this) in his own State Department (and elsewhere) over recognition of Israel.

After this, however, he imposed an arms embargo on Israel and Arab nations as well. This hurt Israel much more because those other Arab countries had lots of oil-dependent countries all too willing to supply all kinds of weapons to them.

Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Fatah, Hizbullah., whatever...history has shown that most Arabs still believe that they alone have any political rights in all of MENA, what they refer to as "purely Arab patrimony."

Any Arabs replacing Hamas will most likely have this same supremacist mindset.

Unless some miracle occurs— and Israel should not rely on that—and a large contingent of de-Islamist, de-jihadi Arabs can be found to replace Hamas, Israel needs its own presence there as well.

Three quarters of a century of Jew-hating education in both the latter day Arafatians in suits of Fatah's Mahmoud Abbas's PA/PLO and the Hamas folks as well will take many years to undo. And that presumption is laughable.

UNRWA did more than its share in promulgating this hatred in its schools, from kindergarten on up. And its own members also participated in the atrocities of October 7th. Worse still, American tax payers have provided hundreds of millions of dollars to such agencies over the past half century or more.

The vast majority of Arabs simply didn't don't want to change their age old attitudes towards "Kilab Yahud" Jew dogs.

When nations or organizations controlling territory attack their neighbors, especially in Hamas's case, repeatedly, with the professed aim at the total eradication of its neighbor, there's obviously a price to be paid. And part of that price will be territorial. Once again, recall that Hamas had a rich pre-Arab conquest Jewish history and was part of the original 1920

Mandate of Palestine, where Jews, Arabs, and other inhabitants were free to live .

For the sake of hoped for future peaceful relations with Gaza

Arabs, the late Prime Minister General Ariel Sharon forcibly uprooted thousands of Jewish Gazans almost twenty years ago. They left sophisticated green houses, infrastructure, and other facilities so that Arabs could utilize them. The latter burned them all down. Need I say anything more?

Sharon and Israel got thanked for this with tens of thousands of rockets, incendiary devices, mortars, and repeated acts of terror.

Enough!

It's time for a total house cleaning now.

Given this reality, and with hopefully a new American administration wholly opening its eyes to this sad fact of life, Israel must not return to the status quo ante bellum.

[Table of Contents](#)

Gerald A. Honigman is a retired Florida educator who has done extensive doctoral studies in Middle East Affairs, history, political science, and national security policy studies. He is widely published—in both print and web—and his books and other work can be found in leading universities all over the world.

Follow NER on Twitter [@NERIconoclast](#)