

The lesson of Ambassador Boehner's outreach to Hamas: Trump's Gaza plan is the only way forward

By Lev Tsitrin

The [Israeli reaction](#) to the news of face-to-face negotiations between US hostage envoy Adam Boehler and Hamas that contradicted American policy of not negotiating with terrorists directly ranged between concern and consternation – to the point where Secretary of State Marco Rubio had [step in and calm down the nerves](#) by explaining that this was just a “one-off situation” that in any event “hasn’t borne fruit” and that “our primary vehicle for negotiations on this front will continue to be Mr. Witkoff and the work he’s doing through Qatar.”

While I hate to contradict Secretary Rubio, I think that Ambassador Boehler's Hamas encounter actually did “bear fruit,” and a hugely important one at that – though not the one he sought. It proved beyond the slightest shadow of doubt that Trump's Gaza plan of permanently moving Palestinians out of Gaza as a prerequisite for rebuilding it is the only viable way forward.

How so? Consider what Ambassador [Boehler proudly touted](#) as “not a bad first offer” by Hamas – “They suggested a five-year to 10-year truce, where Hamas would lay down all ... weapons, and where the United States would help, as well as other countries, ensure that there's no tunnels, there's nothing taken on the military side, and that Hamas is not involved in politics going forward,”

That this is no new idea is beside the point (I googled “Hamas

offers ten years hudna” and what came up was “In January 2004, senior Hamas leader Abdel Aziz al-Rantissi offered a 10-year hudna in return for complete withdrawal from all territories captured in the Six-Day War, the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, and the “right of return” for all Palestinian refugees” as well as a [similar 2008 NBC News story](#) titled “Hamas offers truce in return for 1967



borders” – “The leader of Hamas said ... his Palestinian militant group would offer Israel a 10-year truce as implicit proof of recognition of Israel if it withdrew from all lands it seized in 1967.”) Put simply, Ambassador Boehler’s pride in drawing this “offer” out of Hamas is merely a testimony to his being new to Middle East diplomacy, and nothing else. But it also raises a hugely important question: and then what?

Let us suppose that Hamas-offered “five-year to 10-year truce” kicks in, and according to the Arab plan, Gaza is rebuilt at the \$53 billion cost footed by the Gulf states and Europeans. Yet, time flies, and the truce is over. There is yet another war, and Gaza is levelled again. What exactly did the Arab plan achieve? Nothing at all: a mere “five-year to 10-year” breather in misery, death, and destruction – at the not-small cost of \$53 billion, this money gone down the drain.

Now, compare this to Trump’s plan: Gazans live peacefully and tranquilly elsewhere, in a nice place – a place like South Africa that loves them so much that, forgetting its own domestic problems, it went on their behalf to the International Court of Justice accusing Israel of “genocide” – or in Ireland, Spain, and Norway that were equally vocal (not to say “shrill”) on their behalf. And while Gazans prosper

abroad, basking in love and care, Gaza is rebuilt – for strictly peaceful purposes. No more war emanating out of it, no more destruction, suffering, and death. The rebuild-destroy cycle implicit in Hamas' "offer" to Ambassador Boehner is replaced by permanent happiness and tranquillity that is enshrined in Trump's plan

One positive thing about mistakes is, that one can learn from them. Even if Ambassador Boehner outreach to Hamas was a diplomatic mistake, it offered an extremely valuable lesson. It revealed Hamas' thinking and plans, and proved beyond the shadow of the doubt that the only way to proceed in Gaza is by implementing Trump's plan. There is simply no alternative to it.