

The Only Way to Achieve a Durable Peace in the Middle East Is to Eradicate Hamas



by Conrad Black

The widespread gloom over the full resumption of the Gazan war is understandable in strictly human terms, but geopolitically it is an unambiguously good thing.

We now know that despite the prophetic peacemaking impulses of Anwar Sadat, no peace would be possible until those identifying as Palestinians acknowledged the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish state. We now know that the entire [“land for peace” formula](#) under which Sinai and Gaza were [vacated by Israel](#) was a fraud other than in its application to Egypt and Jordan. The Palestinians, and the Arab powers that sponsored them, initiated and lost wars and regained lost land with assertions of peace that as far as the Palestinian leadership is concerned were merely ceasefires that were invariably

violated by them without even a decent interval.

The objective in the Middle East is a durable peace, and the only way to achieve it is to replace Palestinian leadership that will never agree to Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state with leadership that accepts that right.

There is no dispute that Hamas has been entirely supplied and trained and guided by Iran. The Arab powers have no more affection for terrorists than Israel does, although they had invested decades in distracting the Arab masses with a saga of Palestinian tragedy that is largely genuine but for which the Palestinian leadership and their Arab sponsors were chiefly responsible. It is indicative of the desperation of the Iranian government to prevent a peace agreement between Israel and Saudi Arabia that they would approve and assist such a barbarous mission as the atrocity perpetrated by Hamas on Oct. 7 against Israel. It is further evidence of this same desperation that Iran is [enabling the Yemeni Houthis](#) and their protégés in Iraq and Syria to attack American forces around the Middle East.

Iran is encouraging suicide missions by the puppets it has inherited from the Arab states, which are now more interested in gaining Israeli assistance as the Arabs' ancient Turkish and Iranian enemies encroach upon them. And Hamas and the Houthis have little choice since Iran is their only source of money and arms. In these circumstances, the best route to a genuine and durable peace between Israel and its neighbours is the elimination of Hamas, to permit the rise of a Palestinian faction that is prepared to accept a small but independent Palestine whose borders will be guaranteed by all relevant powers, and a satisfactory compromise over the borders of the state of Israel. The Jews and the Palestinians are not numerous peoples and they will not have large states, but ever since the British promised in 1917 a homeland for the Jews without compromising the rights of the Palestinian Arabs, this was the only solution that was ultimately going to succeed.

The United States has endorsed the Israeli government's assertion that the Gaza truce was broken by Hamas, and this could not have been done without the approval of Iran, any more than the Houthis would attack American naval vessels, or the Iranian proxies in Iraq and Syria would attack American encampments in those countries, without orders from Iran.

The medieval totalitarian theocracy in Tehran is prepared to fight against peace, Israel, and even the United States, to the last Palestinian and Houthi terrorist. Iran is gambling that the United States will be content to destroy ammunition dumps and shoot down drones, and if need be, kill a few more Houthis, but not attack Iran itself. Anyone examining the chronic and completely failed Obama-Biden policy of appeasement of the ayatollahs could be excused for thinking that this administration will not retaliate directly against Iran until, to adapt a Cold War expression, Iran lobbs a missile into the men's room at the White House (if even then).

Since the 75-year history of the state of Israel has demonstrated that the only possibility of agreed borders and a durable peace is to destroy or neutralize those Palestinian elements who will not in any circumstances negotiate or abide by such a peace, and Oct. 7 gave Israel a full moral justification for implementing such a policy against Hamas, and Hamas deliberately uses the civil population of Gaza as a shield, deliberately sacrificing women and children to try to shelter their terrorist cadres in schools and mosques and hospitals, Hamas is chiefly responsible for the resulting civilian casualties. The only foreign country whose attitude is of any importance to Israel is the United States. All polls indicate that American opinion is solidly behind Israel's right of massive reprisal.

Because the Democratic Party has nurtured the vipers of anti-Americanism, anti-Semitism, and woke nihilism—and those elements now apparently comprise 20 to 30 percent of the cadres of that party—President Biden is reduced to the

increasingly inelegant spectacle of trying to reconcile highly supportive comments on behalf of Israel with an agitation for the release of the remaining 150 or so hostages Hamas seized, to the point of apparently placing the lives of these unfortunate victims above the possibility of getting rid of Hamas once and for all and definitively ending a large part of Iran's capability of exercising a violent criminal influence around Israel's borders.

It is not difficult to identify the motives that reduce the administration to this ambiguity. But to the credit of the president and his chief collaborators, in supporting the Israeli version of the reason for the breakdown of the truce, the administration has indicated that it is more interested in upholding the traditional bipartisan American policy of support for the Jewish state than it is to make more than ineffectual gestures toward the woke, cancerous elements now gnawing at the innards of the Democratic Party.

The Israeli leaders have been very careful to present a virtually Churchillian program of "blood, sweat, toil, and tears." No false optimism or early end to combat has been expressed, but it is clear that Israel has eliminated hundreds of miles of Hamas's tunnels and has effectively stamped Hamas out in almost half of Gaza, including much of Gaza City. With another month or six weeks of this intensive clearance and reduction of the territory where the surviving Hamas units are cowering beneath the rubble and among the women and children, the Israeli mission will have been substantially accomplished.

The foolish Iranian-sponsored [attacks on American ships](#) and deployments in Syria and Iraq will assist in maintaining American support for Israel's policy of the complete destruction of Hamas. On this issue, all factionalism in Israel has ended and the absurdly large 38-member cabinet reflects all sane Israeli political factions. We are probably only a month or six weeks away from the existence, for the first time, of conditions that could produce a durable Arab-

Israeli settlement and assist in repulsing the sinister encroachment of the Turks and the Iranians on the crossroads of the Middle East, where they have both been occupying powers before and local tradition does not recall their regimes with cordiality.

It's short-term pain for long-term gain: The prospects for peace in the Middle East, or for the Palestinians, have not been better since the Pax Romana 19 centuries ago.

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