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ISRAEL NEWS

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Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation*

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loudly condemn
manifestations of
antisemitism while
refusing to examine one of its
major causes.

By narrowing the
conversation to threats that
conveniently fit their advocacy
frameworks, the JCRCs have

Commentary...

American Jewish Groups Shirked Their Primary Mission, Encouraged Antisemitism By Josh Katzen

Jewish communal organizations, especially the network of Jewish Community Relations Councils (JCRCs), are long overdue for serious self-examination. For years, these institutions positioned themselves as the moral compass of the Jewish community, promoting expansive immigration policies, including from Muslim countries, as a matter of unquestionable principle.

However, in doing so, they substituted ideological reflex for strategic responsibility. They celebrated their own humanitarianism while failing to assess how the political, cultural and ideological backgrounds of the Muslim immigrant populations they supported might intersect with the specific vulnerabilities of American Jews. This gap between rhetoric and reality is now impossible to ignore.

HIAS, once the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society but now simply "HIAS," illustrates this drift. Founded in 1881 to rescue Jews fleeing persecution from Russia and Eastern Europe, it played a heroic role throughout the 20th century. But as Jewish immigration waned, the organization reinvented itself, shifting toward a general refugee-assistance model, compensated on a per-capita basis by the federal government.

Today, much of HIAS's work involves resettling people from Muslim countries where attitudes toward Israel and the Jewish people, not to mention toward American values, have been shaped by centuries of antisemitism. Regardless of whether or not the shift from supporting Jews to supporting Muslims was guided by admirable humanitarian instincts or financial considerations, HIAS has refused to address how its transformed mission endangers Jewish communal security today.

The JCRCs as well not only supported this transformation but turned it into a moral banner. They dismissed internal dissent as narrow-minded, insisting that "Jewish values" required an uncritical stance toward immigration policy and calling those who raised questions "racists."

They, too, failed to analyze how the antisemitism Muslim immigrants brought with them would enter American civic life through activist networks, university movements, unions, local politics and general society. They ignored how these dynamics would overlap with foreign-funded campaigns seeking to delegitimize Israel and reshape American political culture. In doing so, they neglected their core obligation: safeguarding the well-being of the communities they claim to represent.

And the direct result of this failure has brought us the far-left Muslim-led "Squad" in the U.S. House of Representatives and New York City mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani, a Muslim Democratic Socialist and hater of Israel. And more antisemitic Muslim politicians are on the way.

A deeper failure—arguably, the most damaging—has been the self-congratulatory refusal of JCRCs and allied agencies to address how these immigration patterns have coincided with the rise of Jew-hatred. For years, they treated any discussion of downstream consequences as taboo, as though acknowledging reality were somehow immoral. This avoidance has distorted communal discourse, shutting out critical voices while actively undermining the community's ability to confront a crisis that now dominates Jewish life in America.

Jewish communities across the country are mobilizing against unprecedented levels of antisemitism. Yet the very organizations leading antisemitism "task forces" refuse to acknowledge how they themselves have contributed to the problem by aiding the importation of political worldviews targeting Jews and Israel. The JCRCs' insistence on silence has produced a contradictory position: They

fractured communal strategy at the moment unity is most needed. Their analytical blind spots have prevented the Jewish community from forming a coherent, long-term approach to safety. No community can confront a problem when its own institutions insist on filtering out key information and analysis that conflict with outdated ideological commitments.

The time has come for Jewish communal organizations that have contributed to the steady rise in antisemitism to acknowledge their misjudgments, reassess their approach, fire incompetent staff members and rebuild policy frameworks, recognizing that the security and well-being of the Jewish community is the highest of humanitarian concerns.

The JCRCs loudly proclaimed that the white community owed a reckoning to black Americans after the Black Lives Matter movement blamed it for the failure of blacks to thrive in the United States.

The JCRCs now owe the entire Jewish community a reckoning for their failure to protect it. (JNS Nov 18)

How a Saudi F-35 Deal could Impinge on Israel's Strategic Edge

By Shimon Sherman

U.S. President Donald Trump intends to move forward with an agreement to supply Saudi Arabia with advanced F-35 stealth warplanes.

"We'll be selling," he told reporters aboard Air Force One on Tuesday. "They wanna buy a lot of jets, I'm looking at that. They've asked me to look at it. They want to buy a lot of '35s, but they want to buy actually more than that, fighter jets," Trump added.

Despite Trump's assurances, the proposed sale, which includes 48 aircraft, is awaiting internal U.S. government clearance before advancing to a full interagency review.

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman met with Trump on Tuesday as part of a high-profile visit to the White House. The proposed F-35 sale is part of a broader negotiation in which Saudi Arabia is seeking a bilateral defense pact with the United States and access to American nuclear technology for a civilian energy program. Officials involved in planning the visit say Riyadh is aiming to advance the defense and nuclear tracks under a single comprehensive arrangement.

The arms negotiations come on the heels of the large defense packages already signed between Washington and Riyadh. In May, Trump authorized what he described as "the largest defense sales agreement in history," a \$142 billion framework providing Saudi Arabia with "state-of-the-art warfighting equipment and services from over a dozen U.S. defense firms."

The discussion over a potential weapons deal centers on the singular nature of the F-35 warplane. The F-35 is considered the most sophisticated U.S. combat jet, combining fifth-generation stealth, advanced sensing and integrated data-fusion capabilities. The jet's low-observable profile is built on "radar-evading shaping" and composite materials designed to reduce detection.

The F-35's propulsion system further incorporates classified thermal-management methods essential to its stealth profile and high-energy onboard systems. The wide array of singular tech innovations leads to a broad range of mission profiles, allowing it to serve simultaneously as a strike, reconnaissance and nuclear platform.

With more than 1,000 aircraft delivered to allied forces worldwide, the F-35 has become the central pillar of U.S. and partner airpower. Its general dominance across several important metrics of aerial power is the primary reason Washington treats any sale as a major strategic decision requiring careful review.

The strategic weight attached to any potential F-35 transfer becomes more significant considering the American commitment to

maintain Israel's Qualitative Military Edge (QME), the principle that Israel must retain superior military capabilities over any neighboring state. The concept took shape in the years after the Yom Kippur War, as Washington deepened its military relationships across the Middle East. U.S. policymakers sought a framework that would allow Arab partners to acquire American equipment while ensuring that Israel could defend itself.

Brig. Gen. (res.) Yosef Kuperwasser, director of the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security, expanded on the critical nature of the QME military paradigm. "Israel has no chance of having a higher quantity of weapons than its opponents, so the way of overcoming the shortcoming is to ensure that we have the quality on our side," he told JNS.

What began as an executive-branch norm eventually evolved into statutory policy. Successive administrations affirmed that the U.S. must guarantee Israel's ability to maintain a decisive QME, and Congress later required formal certification that any major arms sale in the region would not undermine that standard.

The commitment has shaped several contentious decisions, none more illustrative than the 1981 proposal to sell AWACS early-warning aircraft to Saudi Arabia. Israel argued the platform would narrow its advantage and opposed the sale intensely. The Reagan administration countered that strengthening regional air-surveillance capabilities served U.S. interests more broadly. After a protracted debate, Congress approved the transfer, demonstrating how Washington has historically balanced its QME commitments with wider strategic considerations.

Since then, the policy has guided not only which systems Washington provides to regional partners, but also the timing, configuration and operational restrictions placed on those transfers. The current F-35 discussions fall squarely within that tradition—its strategic importance and the capabilities it provides make any prospective sale one of the most consequential tests of this policy in decades.

Israel's view of the debate is shaped by the role the F-35 already plays in the Israeli Air Force. As the only operator of the aircraft in the region, Israel fields a customized variant—the F-35I "Adir"—that incorporates domestic upgrades in electronic-warfare systems, mission software and precision-guided munitions.

Israeli officials describe the platform as a "multi-role combat aircraft capable of both air-to-air and air-to-ground missions while collecting and distributing intelligence during the same sortie," a capability set that has become central to Israel's military doctrine. The IAF has built dedicated infrastructure, including training, data-analysis units and mission-planning centers, to support what defense officials have called the "backbone" of Israel's airpower.

"The F-35 is what gives Israel its qualitative military edge. This was demonstrated many times in the last two years, and the peak of this was the operation in Iran this year," Kuperwasser noted, referring to June's "Operation Rising Lion."

The F-35's exclusivity as well as its central position in Israel's airpower is one reason Israeli strategists view any regional proliferation of the platforms as a significant shift. While Israel has historically adapted to capabilities acquired by neighboring states, the F-35 occupies a different category. The F-35 is embedded in Israel's broader concept of deterrence and operational freedom of action. On Sunday, the IDF submitted a formal policy paper to the government opposing the sale of F-35s to Saudi Arabia, saying "Israel's air superiority could be eroded if other countries in the Middle East possess" the fighter jet.

Kuperwasser explained that even if the sale does go through, Israel will still have a tactical advantage over the Saudis. "Giving Saudi Arabia F-35s will erode the qualitative edge, but it won't close the gap," he observed. "It's not only about a specific weapon system. It's how you use it. We have command and control elements and electronic warfare systems that the Saudis won't get. Some of them were developed by Israel," Kuperwasser said. "Also, they will be flown by Saudi pilots and not by Israeli pilots," he added.

Despite the IDF's opposition, officials in the political echelon have signaled that their response to a potential Saudi F-35 deal depends on what strings will be attached. According to the Axios news website, an Israeli official said Jerusalem is not opposed in principle to the kingdom acquiring the aircraft, but that "the supply of F-35s to Saudi

Arabia needs to be subject to Saudi normalization with Israel."

Kuperwasser warned that conditioning the sale on normalization was a pragmatic but dangerous strategy. "There's definitely a concern because even if the sale is linked to normalization, we don't know how the regime will look in 10 or 15 years. Normalization can be taken back, but the F-35s will be permanent," he said. "That being said, if we can't prevent the sale, we might as well link it to normalization and get something out of it."

Israeli media have also reported that Jerusalem raised questions with Washington about the terms of any deployment and operation of the jets. Officials argued that approving the transfer without clear understandings on these points would undermine U.S. guarantees on Israel's QME.

Israel's conditional position feeds directly into the questions under review in Washington. Trump said on Tuesday that the planes Saudi Arabia will get will be "pretty much the same" as the platforms supplied for Israel. "I know [Israel would] like you to get planes of reduced caliber. I don't think that makes you too happy," Trump told Prince Mohammed. "As far as I'm concerned, I think they are both at a level where they should get top of the line."

However, officials cited by Axios described internal discussions in the Pentagon over what "protections and restrictions" would be required if Washington were to move forward. The constraints on the transfer of F-35s to Saudi Arabia rest not only on concerns over Israel's QME, but also on the potential transfer of classified technology to China, which has deep ties with Saudi Arabia.

According to those accounts, the administration is examining mechanisms that have been used in past sensitive sales. These include narrowing specific mission-system functions, providing a more limited software and data package configuration, and setting parameters for how the aircraft can be employed.

Israel's caution over the prospective Saudi acquisition of the F-35 also reflects a broader trend reshaping the Middle East—multiple regional militaries are modernizing rapidly, acquiring advanced aircraft, air-defense systems and long-range strike capabilities on a scale not seen in recent years.

The United Arab Emirates has pursued one of the most ambitious modernization strategies. The country's earlier proposal to acquire the F-35 moved forward following the Abraham Accords, before stalling over U.S. security restrictions. Beyond the F-35 track, the UAE has expanded its fleet with upgraded F-16E/F aircraft and is negotiating for additional Eurofighter Typhoons. The country has also invested heavily in long-range precision-strike systems and advanced munitions. Abu Dhabi is simultaneously pushing to build a self-sufficient defense industry and reduce dependence on foreign suppliers over the next decade.

Saudi Arabia's plans also extend beyond the F-35 request. Riyadh has invested heavily in upgrading and expanding its fleet of F-15 and Eurofighter Typhoon warplanes and is seeking new air-defense and missile-defense capabilities, while expanding local defense production.

Kuperwasser explained that despite the erosion of Israel's QME, there was a silver lining to some of these developments. When countries that are on the Abraham Accords track get stronger, it's not necessarily for the worst. "It will make them more stable and strengthen their relationship with the U.S. There are advantages in this for Israel," he said.

Turkey has also invested heavily in refurbishing its airpower. Once a participant in the F-35 program, Ankara was removed after it acquired the Russian S-400 mobile long-range surface-to-air/anti-ballistic missile system. Since then, Turkey has expanded its domestic development of the KAAN fighter and pursued alternative procurement channels. In late October, Turkey finalized its deal to purchase 20 Typhoons, which Ankara framed as essential to sustaining its air-combat capacity. Meanwhile, Turkey is one of the region's most active developers of advanced airpower.

"Israel should definitely be worried about the Turkey-Qatar jihadist axis. We don't want them to get too strong. Any conversation about Turkey getting the F-35 should worry us much more," Kuperwasser said. "If they got these platforms into Turkey or into Syria, that would be very threatening and concerning." (JNS Nov 20)

‘ Hamas Views its Survival as a Victory ’ By Yaakov Lappin

Hamas is claiming that it is struggling to locate the bodies of the last three fallen hostages—Dror Or, Ran Gvili and Sudthisak Rinthalak—due to the destruction in the Gaza Strip.

This assessment comes after the terror group transferred “findings” instead of a body on Nov. 17, dragging out the conclusion of the implementation of the Oct. 10 ceasefire’s first-stage. Until now, in exchange for the bodies of deceased hostages—Hamas has handed over 25 out of the 28 it is committed to return—Israel has returned to Gaza the bodies of an unknown number of terrorists killed in the fighting.

Without saying how many, an IDF spokeswoman told JNS that “all the bodies returned so far are Hamas terrorists who were eliminated within the Gaza Strip. The IDF holds the bodies of terrorists. This is according to the decisions of the Security Cabinet, and in accordance with the directives of the political echelon.”

Shalom Arbel, a former senior member of the Israel Security Agency (Shin Bet) who served from 1988 to 2013 in roles involving human intelligence recruitment and operations, told JNS that the current situation is part of a calculated long-term survival and recovery strategy by Hamas.

“I believe that there are objective difficulties in finding the three bodies. But at the same time, Hamas is not too frustrated by this. It is not angry about it, and it does not make sounds of despair that it is having difficulty. This arranges things nicely for it,” he assessed.

This, Arbel argued, is part of Hamas’s wider agenda of “stretching out time to survive and rebuild.”

On the one hand, he said, Hamas says it has failed to find the three bodies, but on the other, it is pleased it hasn’t found them.

“That is exactly the Hamas madness or the contradictions that they live with,” said Arbel. “On the one hand, Hamas tells the United States, Israel and anyone asking them where the bodies are, that there are objective difficulties in locating them. [Yet] if someone from home asks what is happening, ‘why are we not finding them,’ Hamas says it is delaying the process and it is good to drag out time.”

Arbel, who served as a major in the IDF reserves in Lebanon, Gaza, and Judea and Samaria, noted that this duality is inherent to the movement and difficult for Western observers to decipher.

“There is this inherent duality all the time, it is part of the Muslim Brotherhood,” he said. “You sometimes think you are speaking with a schizophrenic, but this is not the case. They know how to navigate between the two paths, or between the two agendas. It is very difficult for Westerners and Israelis to grasp. The Qatari way, for example, is exactly this.”

On the one hand, he said, Qatar embraces Hamas and whispers in its ear to continue committing terrorism and continue building tunnels in exchange for money, while on the other hand, it sits with the United States as a mediator in negotiations, presenting itself as “moderate.”

The goal of such conduct, said Arbel, is to advance from one point to the next toward its greater goals. Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood are, he assessed, in fact making progress vis-à-vis the West in this goal, despite the catastrophic damage they incurred on Gaza.

According to Arbel, this strategy has yielded results despite the devastating war, as the terror group defines victory differently than Israel does.

“The status of Hamas today is better than it was before Oct. 7. True, there were 50,000 [Gazans] killed, the Gaza Strip is ruined, but of course there is also the future,” he said, noting that after the recent United Nations Security Council decision approving President Donald Trump’s Gaza plan, negotiations were scheduled between U.S. Special Envoy Steve Witkoff and Hamas senior member Khalil al-Hayya in Turkey.

“This is excellent for Hamas,” he said. “These are tremendous achievements.”

The very fact that Hamas survived as a terror regime and armed entity in Gaza is seen by it as “a victory,” Arbel assessed. “They are the leaders of the Palestinians. [They are promoting] endless terror attacks in Judea and Samaria. They are meeting U.S. officials. The U.N. decision on the path to a Palestinian state. What do they need more than this?”

While Hamas’s ultimate goals remain the same, he added, it supports the concept of a hudna (temporary truce) for an allotted number of years to enable it “to become stronger and gather forces to fight the enemy again. That is exactly the story.”

While negotiations stall and Hamas continues to violate the ceasefire, the IDF has expanded its operations on the ground across the Gaza Strip.

On Wednesday, terrorists opened fire from the Khan Yunis area of southern Gaza toward IDF troops operating near the Yellow Line separating Hamas-controlled Gaza from the Israeli-controlled part. No IDF casualties were reported.

In a rapid and widespread response, the IDF, led by the Southern Command and guided by the Shin Bet, launched a wave of airstrikes and artillery fire against Hamas targets throughout the Gaza Strip.

Earlier this week, IDF troops from the Nahal Brigade Battle Team identified two terrorists who crossed the Yellow Line and approached forces deployed in the southern Gaza Strip, constituting an immediate threat. The soldiers immediately fired and eliminated both terrorists, the military said. (JNS Nov 20)

Trump’s UN Victory is a Path to a Stalemate in Gaza

By Jonathan S. Tobin

President Donald Trump got his way at the U.N. Security Council on Monday when it approved his 20-point plan for the future of the Gaza Strip. The resolution endorsed the deal that secured a ceasefire in the war that followed the Hamas-led Palestinian Arab terrorist attacks in Israel on Oct. 7, 2023. With Russia and China abstaining rather than vetoing the measure, Trump received the world body’s endorsement for, among other points, the creation of an International Stabilization Force to police Gaza and a Board of Peace to govern it.

The president celebrated the vote in typically hyperbolic fashion, declaring: “This will go down as one of the biggest approvals in the history of the United Nations, will lead to further peace all over the world, and is a moment of true historic proportion.”

Trump is also pleased with the closer relations that he has achieved with Saudi Arabia. The kingdom’s de facto leader, Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman (known as MBS), arrived in Washington the next day for friendly meetings with Trump, discussing, among other things, a major arms sale, and then a gala state dinner where memories of the hostility of the Biden administration toward Riyadh and its royal family were officially buried.

But the notion that Trump’s effort to end the war in Gaza will lead to the Saudis joining the Abraham Accords and recognizing Israel could be as fanciful as the chances that Trump’s plan will succeed in transforming Gaza into a prosperous and peaceful place.

Had the Security Council rejected the scheme, it would have embarrassed the White House and undermined efforts to maintain the ceasefire-hostage release deal that proved a triumph for American diplomacy. The notion that this is going to lead to peace there or anywhere else, however, isn’t just overoptimistic. It’s divorced from reality.

The truth is that despite the optimism coming out of Washington about what will happen in Gaza, it’s already painfully obvious that the Trump plan, which now has the U.N.’s seal of approval, isn’t going to achieve the two things that might give peace a chance: the disarmament of Hamas and its surrender of those parts in the Strip where it is still in control.

That’s not what we’re hearing from the administration.

The president and the members of his foreign-policy team continue to insist that Hamas will disarm. They say that one way or the other, the agreement’s utopian scheme for Gaza’s reconstruction, which also hinges on assembling an entirely mythical civil service of non-political Palestinian technocrats, is going to be implemented.

It may be premature to give up on the plan. After all, the ceasefire went into effect only five weeks ago. The United States has been able to get Indonesia to commit to send troops to join the Gaza force while a number of other nations, including Azerbaijan, Pakistan, Turkey, Egypt, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Cyprus, Australia, Canada and France, have

expressed interest in also participating in some way or helping to finance the scheme.

Still, it's hard to imagine any of them being willing to do what is necessary to disarm Hamas and evict it from the Strip. None of them wants to be accused of acting as collaborators with the Jewish state. Nor are they likely to be willing to absorb the inevitable casualty toll that goes with seeking to root terrorists out of their remaining tunnel strongholds. To assume otherwise is magical thinking.

And far from preparing to give up, Hamas and its terrorist allies have used the last several weeks since the shooting stopped to dig in even deeper in those parts of Gaza, including Gaza City, that remain under their control.

And that is the basic conundrum that those celebrating with Trump need to acknowledge.

Only Israel has the will or the ability to defeat Hamas. Trump sometimes talks as if he is prepared to give Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu the green light to finish off the terror group. But doing so would blow up the ceasefire and erase Washington's diplomatic achievement, sending all the countries that have endorsed the Mideast plan running for cover. And that includes his good friend MBS. And so, for all of his tough talk, the threats made by Trump about ensuring Hamas's surrender are ringing hollow.

Nor is it certain that Netanyahu's own stirring pledge that his government is still committed to the complete defeat of Hamas is credible. One basic fact of Israel's current security dilemma is that Jerusalem will be reluctant to cross Trump by restarting the war in Gaza without his express permission.

If so, what happens next?

The most likely scenario is that the so-called "yellow line," which divides the part of Gaza occupied by Israel after a partial withdrawal from the front line at the time of the ceasefire from the portion now held by Hamas, may well become a permanent addition to the lexicon of the Middle East.

On one side of the line, the U.S.-backed reconstruction plan will, as Washington has already signaled, probably begin to be implemented. And on the other, Hamas will reconstitute the terror state that existed throughout all of Gaza before Oct. 7.

The good news is that compared to the situation prior to the attack on Israel, this scenario is one in which Hamas's ability to fulfill its vows to go on killing Jews—let alone repeat the Oct. 7 attacks again and again—will be greatly diminished.

The bad news is that it falls far short of achieving one of the two goals of Israel's post-Oct. 7 war: eradicating Hamas. At best, it merely puts Israel in a somewhat stronger position the next time Hamas is built up enough to resume the fighting.

Nor should we expect that the situation will go smoothly in the non-Hamas-controlled part of Gaza. Palestinians are likely exhausted from the price they were made to pay for supporting Hamas's continued commitment to destroying Israel and achieving the genocide of Israelis. But the expectation that ordinary civilians will be eager to support a non-Hamas government and the U.S. reconstruction effort is wishful thinking. They will also be under great pressure to back a guerrilla campaign against both the Israelis and anyone else sent there to keep the peace.

Like other elements of the plan, such as the unspecified reform of the Palestinian Authority that governs Judea and Samaria as a prerequisite for them participating in the reconstruction of Gaza, the belief that moderate Arab and Muslim governments will sacrifice blood or treasure to ensure the end of Hamas remains a fantasy.

This is not a prescription for peace, but rather, one for a new stalemate between Israel and the United States on one side, with Hamas, which can still count on support from Iran as well as America's Turkish and Qatari frenemies, on the other.

Does this mean, as some Israelis fear, that what will sooner or later unfold is a scenario in which an independent Palestinian Arab state in Gaza will eventually become a reality? Probably not.

There is language in both the 20-point plan that Netanyahu signed off on several weeks ago, which the Security Council resolution is based on, that speaks of a theoretical future in which a Palestinian state might be created there.

It says that after an unspecified reform of the P.A., and after Gaza

is rebuilt and rid of terrorists, "the conditions may finally be in place for a credible pathway to Palestinian self-determination and statehood, which we recognize as the aspiration of the Palestinian people."

That will be interpreted by some as a legally binding obligation to create such a state. Indeed, far-left Israelis and American Jews—like the leaders of the left-wing J Street lobby—are, as they told *The New York Times*, already fantasizing about Trump imposing a Palestinian state in Gaza, and then doing the same in Judea and Samaria, empowering the same groups that threaten Israel.

None of that is going to happen.

The acceptance of Hamas remaining in part of Gaza, as it was before Oct. 7, may be as close to a state as the Palestinians will get. No Israeli government—whether headed by Netanyahu or one of his political opponents—will accept the creation of a sovereign government in any part of Gaza that might have the ability to threaten or invade the Jewish state as the Hamas state did on Oct. 7. And the achievement of the conditions placed on Palestinian statehood in the Trump plan is a possibility so far-fetched as to render it more a matter of science fiction than a policy proposal.

Like past generations of Palestinian leaders, the criminals running Hamas and their corrupt counterparts that lead the Fatah Party (which controls the P.A.) remain unwilling and unable to accept statehood under any conditions but Israel's elimination. As was true in 1948, 1967, 1993, 2000 and 2008, and any other time when they could have compromised and received a state, their only goal remains Israel's destruction. They don't want a state next to Israel. They want one instead of it—and that is something they can never have.

Nor should Americans or Israelis be entirely sanguine about Trump's optimism about relations with the Saudis.

As much as Trump is right to try and cultivate this alliance, he ought to be listening to Netanyahu and conditioning any major upgrade of Riyadh's war-making capacity, such as selling it greater numbers of the same high-tech F-35 Jets that Israel has, on its willingness to make peace with Israel.

The administration's "America First" foreign-policy goals include creating a situation where the Saudis will join with the Israelis to oppose Iran and safeguard the West's interests in the Middle East while the U.S. pivots to Asia to deal with the threat from China.

However, the belief that MBS is interested in exchanging his country's current close under-the-table relationship with Israel for one involving open recognition, normalization, and the exchange of ambassadors and embassies—as was true for those who joined the 2020 Abraham Accords—has little foundation. He wants Israel and the United States to act as counterweights to the threat that the Saudis still face from Iran, even after its defeat in the 12-day war it fought with Israel and the Americans last summer.

But his moderation has its limits. And, as guardian of the holy Islamic cities of Mecca and Medina, even MBS is always going to worry more about angering the Islamist fundamentalists that are part of his nation's governing elite than he will about pleasing Trump or the Israelis.

All of which means that the American plan is neither a pathway to peace nor the nightmare scenario that some on the Israeli right fear it will turn out to be. Sadly, the enormous sacrifices made by Israelis during the two years after Oct. 7 will, barring a dramatic and unlikely acceptance by Trump that his peace plan is a flop, turn out to have not achieved the removal of the deadly threat to their nation.

Still, by gaining the release of the last hostages being held by Hamas, Trump again earned the gratitude of Israelis. It's also true that thanks to the successes achieved by the Israel Defense Forces in the war, as well as Trump's commitment to smashing the Iranian nuclear program, the current strategic equation in Gaza and the region is one in which Israel has been strengthened since Oct. 7, while its enemies are weaker.

But unless the president is ready to let the war begin again, his plan is looking as if it is just one more waystation on the road to the inevitable next round of fighting between democratic Israel and genocidal Palestinian Islamists. (JNS Nov 19)