

Analysis | Gaza War Is Over, an Impediment to Trump's Truly Lucrative Prize: Israeli-Saudi Normalization

Thursday 16 January 2025, by [LEVINSON Chaim](#) (Date first published: 16 January 2025).

Netanyahu and his spin doctors promise that the hostage deal is just a tiny lull, after which, if need be, the war will resume at full strength. But everybody, from Doha to Riyadh, from D.C. to Abu Dhabi, is here for the grand deal, from advisors to brokers, huge infrastructure projects to multi-billion arms deals

U.S. President Donald Trump shakes hands with Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in the Oval Office at the White House in Washington D.C., U.S. March 20, 2018. Credit: Jonathan Ernst/ REUTERS

It is not recommended to buy what the Prime Minister's Office is selling. In fact, the hostage deal is the end of the war. Whatever its name - the Swords of Iron War, the Genesis War, the War of Revival - it's over. The final arrangements are still being worked out, but the general direction is clear. Cease-fire now, Saudi Arabia later.

In an attempt to sell the deal to his base, Netanyahu and his spin doctors promise that this is but a small, tiny lull, after which, if need be, the war will resume at full strength, with lethal fire. And this time it won't be with U.S. President Joe Biden, that wimp, but with license from President Donald Trump to withhold food and more from Gaza.

Prime minister's mouthpiece Jacob Bardugo said on his show on Galey Israel radio Wednesday evening, "There is a Trump outline that protects Israel's security interests and achieves all of the war's goals. According to the new outline, Israel remains on the [Philadelphi route](#), we get to prepare for Iran and Syria and, of course, we bring back the hostages."

Demonstration in Tel Aviv in front of IDF headquarters calling for hostage release. Credit: Itai Ron

In his meeting Wednesday afternoon with Finance Minister Bezalel [Smotrich](#), too, Netanyahu again promised that the fighting may resume at any time. Smotrich will vote against the deal, but he'll accept this promise so as not to jeopardize the governing coalition and in order to leave National Security Minister Itamar [Ben-Gvir all alone](#), like a coin rattling in a tea kettle.

Trump, as Bardugo pointed out, does indeed have a plan - a regional arrangement [led by Saudi Arabia](#). Netanyahu has been given two options: to accept the outline gladly and willingly, or to accept it sadly and regretfully. Both lead to the same place.

Too many foreign parties are involved in the deal that will be announced: Turkey, Qatar, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the [United Arab Emirates](#) and, of course, the United States. None of those went into

the thick of things just to have fighting resumed in a month, minus 30 hostages. Everybody is here for the grand deal.

Right-wingers had better carefully listen to Wednesday's remarks by the incoming U.S. National Security Advisor [Mike Waltz](#) on Dan Senor's podcast. He called Saudi-Israeli normalization "a huge priority," saying: "It's the next round of the Abraham Accords. I've always kind of felt like this current administration shifted their language to call it normalization rather than what it is, which is, I think, a tremendous historic region-changing agreement between Saudi Arabia and Israel," Waltz said, adding that this was why Iran sent Hamas to blow it up.

"So, that is the objective," Waltz said, "Let's eliminate these terrorist organizations. And then let's start talking political solutions, economic solutions. I want to, by the end of President Trump's term, to be talking about infrastructure projects, water, rail, fiber, data centers."

In a heart-wrenching moment on Wednesday's broadcast of "The

Patriots," on the [Bibi-ist Channel 14](#), host Yinon Magal suddenly noticed that the audience was unmoved by his explanations of the benefits of the hostage deal. He changed tack, saying "I'm also hearing about settlements to be established in northern Gaza." "Sorry to disappoint, but whoever thinks the Trump's administration "huge priority" will be scrapped for three new settlements is out of touch with reality.

Protesters hug in front of IDF headquarters in Tel Aviv during a protest calling for a hostage release after receiving news of a completed deal Wednesday evening. Credit: Tomer Applebaum

After the hostage deal, massive Arab-Muslim pressure is expected to be put to bear on Hamas to give Gazans the long cease-fire they need to rebuild Gaza and their homes. The hope is that Hamas, in the name of Arab unity, will relinquish control in Gaza and will claim to have given the reins to a "unity government."

This government is expected to be made up of puppets acceptable to the West, some constellation or another with the Palestinian Authority and great influence by Saudi, Qatari and UAE funds. A resolution to the situation in Gaza will pave the way to peace with Saudi Arabia.

Biden failed to achieve Israeli-Saudi normalization. Trump will be happy to dance over his failure in Riyadh. Imagine how many Americans could support themselves through deals with the Arab monarchy, working as global advisors for huge infrastructure projects and earning hefty fees as lawyers and arms-deals brokers.

Imagine the shares that could be bought today with an eye to hundred-billion-dollar arms contracts tomorrow. For the incoming president, Saudi Arabia is a bank that wants to give him the key to the safe.

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P.S.

• Haaretz. Jan 16, 2025 12:33 am IST:
<https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-01-16/ty-article/.premium/as-gaza-war-grinds-to-halt-trump-pivots-to-what-he-really-cares-about-israel-saudi-ties/00000194-6bcd-d876-affe-7f94b0000>

- Chaim Levinson's articles in The Haaretz:

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