

A Tale of Two Worlds

written by David M. Weinberg | 23.11.2025

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair..."

Charles Dickens famously began his 1859 novel *A Tale of Two Cities* with the above dichotomous description of reality. Such a bifurcated reading seems to apply to Israel's current strategic situation too. We seem to be living in two different worlds based on two divergent worldviews with two contradictory conclusions.

From one perspective, Israel is winning on all fronts. It crushed Iran, Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Houthis with American support, and proved to everybody in the world that it can bounce back from stinging collapse to reasserted regional dominance.

Israel has reset its defense policies to prioritize offense against all threats, real-time and developing. No one says boo as Israel daily bombs enemy emplacements and reinforcements in Lebanon, Syria, and even Gaza. Washington runs cover on this for Israel. President Trump is wising up to the chicanery of Hamas and Turkey too.

Moreover, Trump and his Secretary of State Marco Rubio just drove through a UNSC resolution that accepts the indefinite halving of Gaza with Israeli control of the eastern section; insists on total demilitarization, disarmament, and deradicalization of the remaining Palestinian-held Western half; makes clear that there is no legal or practical obligation to create a Palestinian state (thus pushing back against French President Macron and others who have "recognized" a hallucinatory, non-existent state); and does not define peace as contingent on Israel territorial withdrawals in the West Bank.

On the contrary, the administration has justified/legitimized intensified Israeli settlement in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria.

The United States is willy-nilly driving Saudi-Israeli normalization, coming sooner

or later, with clear linkage between Saudi moves towards Abrahamic peace with Israel and the goodies like jets and nuclear facilities promised to the Saudis. The administration also promises to maintain Israel's qualitative military edge, even if it sells F-35 jets to Riyadh five years down the line.

Washington is tightening sanctions on Iran and probably will rejoin Israel in striking at Iran's still-dangerous nuclear and missile facilities again this year. In the meantime, Trump is massively replenishing Israel's armaments for the next wars. Trump is also scheming smartly on the broader strategic stage, acting to bring Kazakhstan and other Asian powers into alignment with America (and Israel) and away from partnership with Russia, China, and Iran.

And oh yes, Trump's practical, Israel-friendly diplomacy played a key role in securing the near-miraculous release, all-at-once, of the remaining Israeli hostages held by Hamas in Gaza.

And finally, can you imagine how perilous the Mideast situation, and Israel's, would have been if a radical progressive Democratic candidate had won the US presidential election?

ON THE OTHER HAND, perhaps Israel's strategic situation ain't so rosy. Radical Islam - including Iran, Hezbollah, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the Turks and Qataris - is on the rebound. The world is doing little to stop Iran's nuclear rebuilding, Hezbollah's rearming, or Hamas' re-asserting of dictatorial control in Gaza.

Israel's borders remain porous; thoroughly penetrated by Iranian-supplied drones delivering weapons to terrorists and criminal gangs. Terrorism is on the rise in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria - fueled by the massive numbers of hardcore Palestinian terrorists just released from Israeli prisons.

And Trump? He thinks he can reshape the region by hucksterism and braggadocio alongside mega-business deals, ridiculously declaring "peace in our time for the first time in 3,000 years," and handcuffing Israel in the process. Israel dares not make a military move - not even a local strike on remaining Nukhba cells underground in eastern Gaza - without Trump's approval. Israel must not upset the transactional-on-steroids, egocentric, big money "peace" deals that Washington is advancing!

It seems that Trump does not want to disappoint his dictator buddies in Ankara and Doha, nor his new dictator buddy in Damascus either. Nor his “best friend” from Riyadh, whose wobbly Saudi throne could “blowback” F-35 jets against Israel in an Islamic coup situation.

It is almost as if Trump is ignorant of the enduring ideological, transnational/religious nature of conflict in the region, thinking instead that money and the force of his personality can fix it all.

So, Trump is imposing a flawed freeze on the situation. He is “Bibi-sitting” Binyamin Netanyahu, preventing Israel from finishing the job in Gaza, Lebanon, and Iran. He already seems to be dialing back from demands for real disarmament of Hamas and instead pushing for rapid reconstruction in Gaza. American troops headquartered at the new “Civil-Military Coordination Center” in Kiryat Gat essentially are overseeing the free flow of humanitarian aid straight into the hands of Hamas.

Equally upsetting is Trump’s internationalization of the conflict in Gaza by placing US troops in Israel and inviting Egyptian and Turkish troops into Gaza. (Israel *must* prevent this!). Hamas denies that it ever agreed to disarm or accept an “International Stabilization Force” (ISF) in Gaza, but Trump wants Israel to swallow the delusion that Azerbaijani and Indonesian soldiers will waltz into Gaza under ISF auspices and then Hamas will melt away.

Worse of all is that after two years of heroic battle against Hamas, and with tough battles ahead against Hamas in the West Bank, Trump expects Israel to swallow the re-tabling of Palestinian statehood as a possible “pathway” to peace in the future. UNSC resolution 2803 introduced by the US even references the rotten French-Saudi declaration on a two-state solution and the even worse “New York” plan voted on in the General Assembly.

How disappointing, especially when this comes from the Trump administration! October 7 should have been a super-final nail in the coffin of the Palestinian statehood boondoggle, not a spur to a Security Council resolution that revives it!

So where are Israel’s strategic-diplomatic gains? What happened to mass emigration of Gazans and recognition of Israeli sovereignty over Judea and Samaria?

Alas, one gets the feeling that President Trump is riding on Israel's hard-fought battles to advance his own, narrower, secular-materialist goals.

And despite his super pro-Jewish and pro-Israeli address to the Knesset just a few weeks ago, Trump now is turning a blind eye to rank antisemitism and anti-Zionism growing in the MAGA wing of his Republican party, by refusing to sideline hate-purveyors like Tucker Carlson and Groypers like Nick Fuentes.

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times... It was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair." Israel must maneuver with wisdom and caution through these muddy times, contending with confounding narratives and bewildering alternatives. Above all, Israel must act with determination to protect its core interests against foe and friend alike.

Published in The Jerusalem Post, 21.11.2025

The opinions expressed in Misgav publications are the speakers' alone.