

Color me skeptical

written by David M. Weinberg | 16.08.2026

Israelis have every reason in the world to seriously doubt the American-hatched plans to bring peace to Israel's southern and northern borders.

In both Gaza and Lebanon there are deeply entrenched, well-equipped, Iranian-backed terrorist armies arrayed against Israel. Nobody has yet met an Islamist truly willing to give up his weapons.

Now, you've got to give the Jared Kushner-driven American diplomacy some credit for trying to defang Hamas and Hezbollah and transform the regional security situation. Remember that nobody in Israel believed that Kushner and his team would be able to wedge Hamas into releasing all remaining Israeli hostages held in Gaza. There was a one-in-one-thousand chance of that happening, and yet it did.

The new American plans are dreamy-delicious too, at least on paper – perhaps hallucinatory, perhaps possible.

Hamas is supposed to be stripped of its weapons (guns, rockets, missiles, underground bunkers and weapons storehouses, and terror attack tunnels) and Gaza is supposed to be demilitarized by an "International Stabilization Force" (ISF) of Moroccan, Albanian and other troops. Hamas rule is supposed to be replaced by a neutral (non-Hamas) "technocratic government." Members of this government and its "new" police force are supposed to be "vetted" for their peaceful intentions.

Hezbollah in Lebanon is similarly, hypothetically, going to be "decommissioned" or driven out of southern Lebanon by the ghostly, Hezbollah-penetrated weakling army known as the "Lebanese Armed Forces." This near-fictional force, overseen by international observers from the US and reportedly by Italy, Switzerland and Indonesia too, are to "verify" Hezbollah's disarmament and disappearance.

This is notionally wonderful! But both Hamas and Hezbollah vociferously deny that they will disarm (except perhaps performatively, imaginarily, a bit for the cameras), and they certainly have not abandoned their declared ideological commitments to the destruction of Israel.

And none of the presumed peacekeepers, observers, verifiers, vetters, stabilizers, and guarantors are going to actually, militarily, kinetically confront Hamas and Hezbollah gunmen. Never ever, none of them, not with a single bullet, never mind with a company of commandos.

Worse still, even before implementation of the plan for Gaza gets going, the so-called US-led "Board of Peace" already is backsliding from the commitments it made to Israel in the 20-point plan signed last fall.

In the original plan (point 13) Hamas' infrastructure was to be "destroyed and not rebuilt" and its weapons confiscated and put "permanently beyond use."

However, article 8 of recently enunciated "road map" for implementation of the grand peace plan downgrades to a situation where weapons are to be "decommissioned and stored," and only after establishment of a new "National Committee for the Administration of Gaza (a "technocratic" government staffed by people undoubtedly loyal to Hamas, after "vetting" by the plan's guarantors like Hamas backers Qatar and Turkey).

"Destroyed" and removed from Gaza has become weapons "stored" in Gaza (meaning that the weapons will be accessible in future to Hamas, "subject to Palestinian law"), and the new governing body now precedes Hamas' disarmament rather than following it.

Plus, there is a new invented category of weapons, "personal weapons" - whatever that means - which will be allowed to Gazans (Hamas chieftains, gorillas, goons, and the like), not confiscated.

Furthermore, the "stabilization force" is no longer defined as a "long term internal security solution working alongside Israel" but as a buffer force between Gaza and Israel (see article 12), meaning that it has no policing role versus Hamas but will be there to prevent the IDF from operating against terrorist threats as they develop; in other words, it will protect Hamas.

AGAIN, Hamas (like Hezbollah) has no intentions of voluntarily disarming itself, and no one other than Israel will truly do the necessary job. Nobody but the IDF is going to do battle with Hamas, and this must be a constant battle.

Alas, Israel already is being forced into a situation where the IDF's hands are tied.

Targeted strikes against Hamas commanders and even against heavily armed Hamas shock troops probing Israeli defenses along the Gaza borders have dropped over the past two weeks to almost zero. This, reportedly at the insistence of the US.

This is a major mistake. What disrupts the ability of terrorist organizations like Hamas to rebuild and conduct attacks on Israel is the constant pressure of targeted counterterrorist operations. As long as they live under a constant Israeli threat, the leaders and operatives of these genocidal gangs are forced to live as hunted men – in hiding, in restrictive operational settings.

Furthermore, to prevent a surprise attack against Israel, it is essential to deny the enemy the ability to organize and prepare. Halting or significantly reducing Israel's counterterrorism operations gives the enemy the confidence and sense of immunity that it currently lacks.

According to reports, the 600 trucks a day of "reconstruction" and food supplies now going into Gaza are largely being "requestioned, "repurposed," and otherwise "taxed" by Hamas for its military rebuilding. Hamas' fighting force is apparently back at 40,000 strong.

Consequently, Israel needs to keep things simple. Kindly Kushner plans aside, and with best wishes for their success, Israel nevertheless must maintain freedom of action to conduct counterterrorism operations.

As a matter of principle and practical defense policy, Israel must forcefully respond to every attack or attempt to attack Israel, and it must interdict emerging security threats in real time – not "restrain" itself to "keep the peace process alive."

Additionally, it cannot and must not withdraw from the security zones currently held before the terrorists have been totally disarmed and their organizations genuinely dismantled.

The containment policies of recent decades that prioritized restraint and diplomacy over enemy degradation and military triumph – failed. This approach allowed enemies to develop attack capabilities under the cover of diplomatic breathing time; what some Western officials mistakenly called periods of "stability."

That approach blew-up in Israel's face, with terror and invasion from the West Bank and Gaza and from Syria and Lebanon, and with the march of Iran's nuclear bomb program to near completion and Iran's ballistic missile array to near-annihilation-of-Israel potential.

Israel today understands that it must continue to make fierce and overwhelming moves against enemy strongholds from Gaza City to Beirut and Isfahan. Israel must attack, not defend. It must initiate, not respond. It must hunt down its enemies, not be hounded by them or be reined in by whimsical international agreements.

Israel must maintain a proactive defense posture including tactical and strategic ascendancy against enemies near and far.

On this, there is a broad consensus in Israel that crosses party lines. Gadi Eisencott and Naftali Bennett have been just as critical as Binyamin Netanyahu of the latest peace plan implementation proposals outlined by Nickolay Mladedov. With Hamas in the neighborhood, they know that the IDF must constantly be on the offensive. They know that Israeli public opinion won't brook any compromise in this regard.

No Israeli leader can be anything but dubious, too, of the tactical LAF test-takeover of two tiny villages in southern Lebanon where Hezbollah used to be based until Israeli troops rooted them out the hard way.

The likelihood that this can be expanded to all southern Lebanon and hold for the long-term without challenge by Hezbollah and its Iranian patron is slim to nil, even with Italian, Swiss, and Indonesian observers. The pilot project is likely no more than a Lebanese public relations endeavor.

Remember UNIFIL, which still impotently and even harmfully hangs around the zone? Is the American team going to propose the evil supervision services of Turkey and Qatar (and perhaps al-Jolani's Syria) in south Lebanon too?

Color me amicably appreciative but stubbornly skeptical of the latest attempts to fashion fanciful diplomatic harmonies on Israel's borders – an attitude born of hard-bitten experience.

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