

Perspective

By L. Jim Tuck

February 6, 2025

Gaza: Will Trump's Out-of-the-Box Plan Work?

In his first hundred days in office, Donald J. Trump is attempting to resolve the long-existing rift between Israel and her avowed enemies of Gaza. In the joint news conference in the Oval Office with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, he said, "the Palestinians in Gaza should not go through a process of rebuilding" and they had "lived a miserable existence there." Earlier in the afternoon, during a meeting with Netanyahu in the Oval Office, Mr. Trump said the Palestinians should "resettle permanently" in "nice homes" somewhere else, and further said, "The U.S. will take over the Gaza Strip, and we will do a job with it, too," Mr. Trump said. "We'll own it and be responsible for dismantling all of the dangerous unexploded bombs and other weapons on the site, level the site and get rid of the destroyed buildings — level it out. Create an economic development that will supply unlimited numbers of jobs and housing for the people of the area. Do a real job. Do something different. President Trump said, (we)"Just can't go back," he continued. "If you go back, it's gonna end up the same way it has for a hundred years."

Will Trump's out-of-the-box plan work, or will the United States get drawn into the sticky quagmire of the Middle East?

1948: Israel, the Jewish state is created

Britain took oversight of the territory known as Palestine in World War I after the Ottoman Empire was defeated, which had ruled over that part of the Middle East. There was an Arab majority and a Jewish minority, as well as other ethnic groups in that territory. Tensions between the Jewish and Arab populations were exacerbated when the UK agreed in principle to the establishment of a "national home" in Palestine for Jewish people. Jews had ancient ties to the land, but Palestinian Arabs also had a claim dating back centuries and opposed the decision. The British said the rights of Palestinian Arabs already living there had to be protected.

By 1947, the Jewish population reached 630,000, just over thirty per cent of the population. In 1947, with the increase of violence between Jews and Arabs, and objection against British rule, the United Nations (UN) voted for Palestine to be split into separate Jewish and Arab states. Jerusalem would become an international city. No Arab nations supported this. They argued the plan gave the Jews more of the land, even though their population was smaller. Britain then withdrew; they handed control of the problem over to the UN.

After the U.K.'s colonial mandate over the territory ended, David Ben-Gurion, the founding father of Israel, proclaimed the State of Israel on May 14, 1948. It was established as a safe haven for Jews fleeing persecution and seeking a national home on land with which they held historic ties. US President Harry Truman immediately recognized the new sovereign nation. Since that time, there has been continual conflict between the Jewish State and Palestinians---over seventy-five years, and nearly every U.S. president has tried to broker a solution to the constant fighting.

The argument of the Trump administration

On whether U.S. troops would be sent to Gaza, the president said at the Oval Office presser, "As far as Gaza is concerned, we'll do what is necessary. If it's necessary, we'll do that." "We're going to take over that piece," Mr. Trump added. "We're going to develop it, create thousands and thousands of jobs, and it'll be something that the entire Middle East can be very proud of." The president was asked by a reporter what authority he has to take over a sovereign territory, and he replied that he's studied the matter closely for months. "I do see a long-term ownership position, and I see it bringing great stability to that part of the Middle East, and maybe the entire Middle East," Mr. Trump said. The president said his decision about taking over Gaza "was not a decision made lightly," and he claimed he's received praise from other leaders in the Middle East, though he did not identify any by name. Netanyahu said Mr. Trump's team is considering the options. Leaders of several of the most powerful Arab nations previously said they strongly

opposed any suggestion that residents of Gaza be resettled in other countries. In the past, Mr. Trump has voiced support for a "realistic two-state solution." Gaza, a 139-square-mile strip of land that shares borders with Israel and Egypt, has been fought over for years. Palestinians have been refugees for decades, ever since Israel gained control of it in the 1967 Six-Day War with Egypt, Jordan and Syria. Asked who would eventually live in Gaza once it's rebuilt, Mr. Trump said, "It should be an international place."

President Trump stated in the White House news conference that he loves the Palestinian people and wants them to live in peace, but if they want to fight and kill, then they would have to be killed. In an article from *The Hill* titled, "Trump doubles down on Gaza Strip idea, says no US soldiers would be needed," reported on February 6, 2025: "President Trump on Thursday doubled down on his proposal for the U.S. to take control of the Gaza Strip and rebuild it, despite pushback from Arab leaders and some Republicans, arguing it would not require American troops. The president in an early Thursday post on Truth Social expanded on his idea first laid out Tuesday, making clear he was serious about the idea after some advisers sought to clarify or temper aspects of the proposal."

The *AP* released a news article on February 5th titled, "Trump's Gaza plan has stunned the region. Here's a look at the serious obstacles it faces:" "President Donald Trump's stunning proposal to forcibly transfer hundreds of thousands of Palestinians out of the Gaza Strip and develop it as a tourist destination faces major obstacles.

The Palestinians and many others view such plans as an attempt to drive them from their homeland after Israel's 15-month offensive against Hamas rendered much of it uninhabitable. It was also seen as an attempt to liquidate their decades-long struggle for a state, which has wide international support.

Arab countries, including Egypt and Jordan — close U.S. allies at peace with Israel — have condemned such plans and roundly rejected Trump's suggestion that they take in more Palestinian refugees. Saudi Arabia issued a rare overnight statement rejecting the idea of transfer and reiterating it won't normalize relations with Israel — a key goal of the Trump administration — without the establishment of a Palestinian state including Gaza.

The proposal also risks undermining the ceasefire in Gaza and the continued release of hostages taken in Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023 attack that triggered the war. Trump has claimed credit for brokering the truce, but its future is now more uncertain."

Peace in the Mideast, how long will it take?

If the president is able to make his plan work, no doubt the world would then praise him for his vision. However, looking back, previous presidential attempts to bring peace to the Middle East have ended in failure.

During the administration of U.S. President Jimmy Carter, he met with Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat during the Camp David Accords in 1979; they came into agreement. Then U.S. Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, stated on NBC's *Today* program: "Everything in the Middle East has a fragile quality, but this is a major achievement." He said Carter "deserves the gratitude of the American people and the gratitude of the world."

The Camp David Accords did bring about a temporary peace. However, signing the peace accords by Anwar Sadat led to his assassination at an annual victory parade in Cairo on October 6, 1981. Already assassins have tried to kill Netanyahu and Trump. What will unfold in the days ahead is anyone's guess.

We still wait and pray for peace in Jerusalem (Psalms 122:6). When our Lord returns to set up the kingdom of God on earth, only then will we have a lasting thousand years of real peace.

But in the meantime, it would also pay us well to note the admonition given in I Thessalonians 5:3: *"For when they say, 'Peace and safety!' then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape."*

This is my Perspective!