



A Case for a Full Israeli Victory over Hamas in Gaza

November 1, 2023 **Lawrence J. Haas** *The National Interest*

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Israel is facing all-too-predictable global pressure to scale back its military operation in Gaza to spare innocent lives and prevent a regional conflict that could draw in Iran, the United States, and other nations.

But critics have it backward. Those concerned about human rights and those seeking peace should be rooting for Israel's full-scale destruction of Hamas—however long it takes or bloody it becomes. That may sound harsh, but it's the only path to more human rights and more peace for both Israelis and Palestinians.

On human rights, Israelis deserve to live without fear of rocket attack, infiltration, and slaughter from across their border. But Gaza's two million Palestinians also deserve peace as well as the prospect of a better life—both of which will remain elusive not because they live next to Israel but because they live under Hamas.

Hamas, the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood movement, seized control of Gaza from the Palestinian Authority in a violent coup in 2007 and has ruled it since with an iron fist. It allows no elections; permits no free press; arrests, beats, and tortures its critics; and murders those suspected of collaborating, or seeking peace, with Israel.

Over the last sixteen years, Hamas has instigated multiple wars with Israel by launching thousands of rockets or attacking the Jewish state in other ways. It then hides its fighters (as it's now doing) in hospitals, mosques, and other population centers in order to boost civilian casualties and turn global opinion against Israel after it responds and the deaths mount.

Nothing would reduce innocent deaths in Israel and Gaza more than Israel's total victory over Hamas. Those pressuring Israel to ease its counter-attacks would, over the long term, subject Israelis to more terror and Palestinians to more rounds of Hamas-instigated war, more death, no freedom, and little opportunity.

For regional and global peace and stability, the case for a total Israeli victory is equally robust: it centers on the impact that Israel's victory—along with parallel and supportive U.S. policies—would likely have on the aggressive aspirations of critical regional and global powers.

First and foremost, Israel's destruction of Hamas would send a strong signal to Iran, which has provided hundreds of millions of dollars as well as weapons and military training for the group since the 1990s, trained hundreds of Hamas fighters in the weeks leading up to the group's October 7 slaughter of more than 1,400 Israelis, and has since recruited Iranian men and boys to fight alongside Hamas.

After empowering its terrorist proxy in Gaza, Iran is now unleashing militant groups to attack U.S. forces in the region, threatening to attack Israeli and U.S. interests directly if the Jewish state continues its ground operations, and raising prospects that Hezbollah (its leading terrorist proxy) will step in as well.

Anything short of Hamas' destruction will encourage Tehran to pursue its expansionist agenda across the region further.

While continuing to support Israel as global opposition mounts, Washington should (1) abandon efforts to nourish U.S.-Iranian rapprochement because they surely lead Tehran to question U.S. resolve and (2) impose the harshest possible financial and other sanctions on the regime, its Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, and key individuals.

Second, Israel's destruction of Hamas would give pause to Moscow, which just hosted a meeting with top officials from Hamas and Iran, is building stronger military and economic ties to Tehran, and is watching events unfold in the Middle East and drawing conclusions about the major players.

Vladimir Putin is counting on waning U.S. support for Ukraine, which Russia invaded in early 2022 in hopes of conquest. Anything less than Israel's destruction of Hamas—facilitated by unwavering U.S. support for the effort—would help convince Putin he's right.

President Biden has requested \$106 billion in additional funds for foreign affairs, the vast bulk of which would go to Israel and Ukraine. Congress should approve the aid for Israel and Ukraine at the same time rather than prioritize the former over the latter, which would further convince Putin.

Third and finally, Israel's destruction of Hamas would help deter China, the most powerful partner in a growing China-Russia-Iran axis that's designed to weaken U.S. global leadership.

As China flexes its muscles across the Pacific and increasingly threatens Taiwan, Xi Jinping, too, is drawing conclusions from events in Ukraine and the Middle East. Waning U.S. support for its allies in either theater would confirm Xi's skepticism about America's staying power and, thus, embolden him.

Rather than press Jerusalem to abandon its war aims, those who purport to care about human rights and peace should consider what the future will hold in the region and beyond if Israel fails to achieve them.

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