



An Alternative Strategy Toward Hamas and the Palestinian Authority

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Incorporating Lessons from Operation Guardian of the Walls
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A Four Point Plan

Based on its comprehensive "Gaza: an Alternative Israeli Strategy (2019)" [see end note] and given developments since its publication – most notably the recent crisis, CIS presents Israeli decision-makers and public, as well as other relevant and interested audiences with an updated, concise version of its recommendations.

CIS proposes that Israel launch a transformative plan for the Gaza Strip concurrent with related constructive steps regarding the West Bank and Jerusalem. The plan employs three baskets of measures: political, economic and security. It presupposes the creation of a powerful Israeli-initiated, US-led regional and international coalition and is designed to reduce challenges to Israel's security, contain Hamas, empower the Palestinian Authority, improve lives for Israelis and Palestinians and contribute to the prospects of a future negotiated agreement.

The plan aims to achieve four specific objectives:

1. **Promoting sustainable stability** while preserving and improving conditions for an eventual two-state agreement.
2. **Isolating Hamas** by reducing its grip on the Gaza Strip, while improving the lives of Gazans and security for Israelis.
3. **Empowering the Palestinian Authority** (PA) while improving its governance capacity and the lives of West Bank and East Jerusalem Palestinians.
4. **Forging a broad regional and international coalition** to partake in the implementation of the plan.

1

Enhancing security and stability

Assumption → Military deterrence alone cannot guarantee long-term security and stability.

Solution → In addition to a resolute strategy of military deterrence, there is a need to formalize and institutionalize ceasefire understandings, as well as to embrace political and economic policies that enhance stability. Avoiding and preventing acts that undermine stability is equally important.

- Formulation, by Israel and Egypt, and possibly others, of Gaza-related ceasefire understandings that go beyond the vague – and failed – “quiet for quiet.” While no understandings can prevent intentional ceasefire violations, this approach aims to both prevent an escalation arising from third-party provocations, as well as friction due to misunderstandings. Here, Egypt is central for negotiating the terms, and might prove critical should it accept the role of monitor as well.
- In the event of a ceasefire violation, the IDF should respond forcefully. Likewise, any ceasefire violation should trigger suspension of reconstruction and financing for the Gaza Strip.
- To promote West Bank stability and empower the PA, Israel should:
 - End the policy of evicting Palestinians from homes in East Jerusalem, tolerate no provocations regarding holy sites in the city, and restore responsible administration of the Temple Mount/Haram a-Sharif plaza based on the historic Status Quo, including Jordan's role there.
 - End creeping annexation of the West Bank in all its forms.
 - End IDF entry into areas where PA security forces exercise their duties as agreed.

2

Isolating Hamas

Assumption → We do not expect Hamas to undergo a fundamental change (ideologically, politically, or operationally) anytime soon. It will therefore be necessary to reduce its influence and weaken its control in order to bring about the desired change in the Gaza Strip and sustain stability in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Solution → Israel should lead policies to weaken Hamas.

Independently, and jointly, with like-minded regional and international partners [below], Israel will act against Hamas' assets, including its sources of finance and presence in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, by undertaking the following:

- Blocking existing venues for the direct transfer of funds via Hamas, replacing them with new mechanisms that ensure the funds serve their intended purpose as part of the Gaza reconstruction effort.
- Conditioning the donor community's support for Gaza economic reconstruction on preventing Hamas' rearmament.
- Designing a strict supervision regime of both ceasefire understandings and reconstruction, along with a commitment of regional and international participants to apply sanctions in the event that Hamas violates its ceasefire provisions and breaches its rearmament restrictions.

3

Empowering the Palestinian Authority (PA)

Assumption → Undermining Hamas and changing dynamics in Gaza, stabilizing the West Bank, and improving prospects for an eventual two-state agreement, all rest, inter alia, on empowering the PA.

Solution → Israel will take steps to facilitate PA empowerment both independently and in concert with relevant regional and international actors [see below]. Restoring lost PA governing capacity must involve enhancing its ability – and constituents' confidence in its commitment – to serve Palestinians' needs and aspirations. This presupposes providing the PA with the 'space' to exercise authority no less than addressing flaws in its norms of conduct. To address these challenges, the following actions are proposed:

- Encouraging donor countries that, concurrent with Gaza rehabilitation, it is essential to invest in PA capacity-building and in bolstering the West Bank economy.
- Encouraging donor countries to insist on improved PA governance, budgetary transparency and accountability.

- Dealing effectively with Israelis who violate the law, improving Palestinian territorial and transportation contiguity, and removing impediments to economic development.
- Enhancing security and civil coordination between Israel and the PA.
- Formulation by Israel, and/or the international community, of a political horizon that revives Palestinians' confidence in a future – however remote – that fulfils their aspirations, and restores their support of the PA as an effective, legitimate agent for that change.

4

Forging an international coalition

Assumption → No single country can execute this comprehensive effort. Only a powerful coalition of like-minded states can overcome resistance, help empower the PA, isolate Hamas and deprive it of resources, reinforce adherence to ceasefire terms, as well as fund and conduct Gaza and West Bank development programs.

Solution → Israel will initiate and call upon the United States to lead the formation of an international coalition in support of this comprehensive plan.

- Formation, under U.S. leadership, of a powerful international coalition comprising Egypt and Jordan, normalizing Arab states and other like-minded members of the international community. In this context:
 - Egypt's role as the primary mediator and likely ceasefire monitor, will be accentuated;
 - Jordan's role in ensuring stability and preserving the Status Quo at Jerusalem's Muslim holy sites will be restored.
- The donor community to be encouraged to coordinate with the PA and Israel a reconstruction plan for the Gaza Strip, and to recommit to development plans for the West Bank.
- This international coalition should supervise PA improved capacities, thus also empowering it to gradually assume responsibility for management of the Gaza Strip.



Notes:

Missing and captive Israelis:

The return of missing and captive Israelis should be relentlessly pursued concurrent with progress toward ceasefire stabilization and Gaza reconstruction.

Risks:

- A more rigorous policy toward Hamas may trigger a reaction, including the renewal of hostilities. Escalation is a calculated risk Israel must take into account in seeking to bring about change.
- This risk is mitigated by the realization that should all efforts fail, and Israel is forced to use force:
 - The military challenge posed by Hamas will not be substantially different from the current one.
 - Having tried a non-belligerent solution, Israel will enjoy a broad consensus at home, and likely greater understanding abroad.

Who We Are

Commanders for Israel's Security (CIS) is Israel's leading movement of retired senior defence establishment officials. Our over 300 members, all having served in the three top positions of the IDF, Mossad, Shin Bet, National Security Council and police, are committed to a single objective: securing Israel's future as the strong democratic home of the Jewish people via separation from the Palestinians in an eventual two-state agreement.

CIS is strictly non-partisan and is active in matters of national security. In addition to its unmatched security credentials, CIS prides itself on another important characteristic: our members are all volunteers who seek no reward except in the knowledge that they place their experience and expertise at the service of securing our country's future for the coming generations.

Gaza: An Alternative Israeli Strategy (2019)

In July 2019 CIS launched [Gaza: An Alternative Israeli Strategy](https://en.cis.org.il/gaza) plan.

An action plan to stabilize the Gaza Strip by institutionalizing and upgrading the ceasefire, implementing a broad rehabilitation and development program to address the dire humanitarian conditions there, the gradual return of the Palestinian Authority to the management of the strip, all to be initiated by Israel and executed with the support of a US-led regional and international coalition.

<https://en.cis.org.il/gaza>





Commanders for Israel's Security (CIS) is a non-partisan movement. Its members are retired generals and equivalents in Israel's security services (the IDF, the Shin Bet, Mossad and Israel Police) who are motivated solely by concern for the future of Israel.

CIS took a decision to promote a security-political initiative that will extricate Israel from the current impasse as an interim step toward implementing its vision.

The movement's vision is centered around the need to reach a permanent two-state agreement with the Palestinians, to normalize relations and enter into security arrangements with pragmatic Arab states, and thus to secure Israel within final, recognized boundaries while ensuring its future as the democratic state of the Jewish people.

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