

May 29, 2025

### ***What the Heck is Hamas?***

As negotiations continue over the release of hostages held by the terrorist organization Hamas in Gaza, and calls grow louder for an end to the war between Israel and Hamas, many are now asking: “Who the hell is Hamas anyway?” Hamas is willing to make this deal or that deal. They will not release the hostages or end the war unless the war is permanently over, unless Hamas survives to fight another day, and unless Israel leaves the Gaza Strip so the terrorists can once again assert their domination and control. In other words, some hostages, presumably not all of them, go free if terrorism wins and democracy loses.

Who is it that President Trump’s negotiator is negotiating with anyway? Hamas supposedly has been largely destroyed. The American negotiator is running around the Middle East, not in Gaza, speaking to those who claim to represent Hamas. Hamas does not exist at all but is rather a figment of the creation of other Arab regimes such as Qatar, Iran, and perhaps even Saudi Arabia. Hamas is merely a stand-in for other terrorists who are hellbent on kicking the Christians and Jews out of the Middle East and spreading their Jihadist philosophy throughout the western world.

The so-called negotiation for release of hostages is completely and totally absurd. The hostages were seized by Hamas in violation of every known international law. Hamas terrorist soldiers raped women repeatedly, one of whom I met with and talked to, and murdered children along with their mothers, fathers, and the elderly. Hamas has no standing to negotiate with anyone. The Western World has no credibility if it negotiates with Hamas. The Arab World is not to be trusted if they advocate that Hamas be negotiated with.

Every day there are rocket attacks against Israel in violation of international law. Every day the Houthis use their Iranian built missiles and foreign built guidance systems to launch attacks **only** against Israeli civilian populations. Yet, what is the Western World,

Europe, or the United States doing about that? The United States is now hands off on the Houthis because they are not attacking American shipping.

Donald Trump may be trying to make himself a candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize, which is absolutely marvelous, but at what cost to victims of foreign terrorism? Israel is only the target of the terrorists, as opposed to the United States, because they are closer. On 9/11, terrorists figured out how to strike at the heartland of the United States. They attacked the World Trade Center, financed and trained by our friends in Saudi Arabia, flying airplanes into the heart of the American cultural and business center. The Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City represented American dominance, strength, and success. The 9/11 terrorists desired and succeeded in making America appear small and weak. It is no accident that the Bush Administration spirited its Saudi Arabian friends out of the United States before they could be questioned. The families of those killed and maimed at the World Trade Center still have not received the answers they deserve, even though the events occurred 25 years ago.

And yet, every day we hear what Hamas will or will not agree to. Hamas does not exist as an entity capable of making any decisions. The few Hamas operatives, most of whom are not in a position to make decisions, are hiding in tunnels in Gaza which the Israelis have not yet found. The decisions as to what Hamas will or will not agree to are being made by the puppeteers who control Hamas and the other terrorist regimes. Without question, one of the major puppeteers is Iran, which is now “negotiating” with the United States so that it may keep its capability of producing nuclear weapons. Why would any sane person make a deal that could permit Iran to attain and use nuclear weaponry?

The Administration denies that it will permit Iran to have the means of making nuclear weapons but, at least one Administration, that of President Obama, failed the American people in that regard. Will Donald Trump make the same mistake in the hopes that he would become a short-term hero to those who do not seek the long-term survival of the United States and the west?

The reality is that none of the terrorist groups operate without their foreign bosses calling the shots. Hezbollah, which essentially has taken over Lebanon and part of Syria, are wholly owned by Iran. While Hezbollah has been weakened and its structure not as

effective as it once was, it is still a potent force for mischief in the Middle East Hezbollah still runs the show in large swaths of Lebanon and has a presence in Syria to smuggle arms from Iran. Hezbollah is not dead, and its goals are alive and well.

The questions Americans rightly ask is what price should we pay to end terrorism in the Middle East. Our early presidents from Adams through Jefferson, as well as President Madison, took on the Barbary Pirates who were ravaging American and European interests in the Middle East. The great American warship, the Philadelphia, was burned to its waterline to prevent it from falling into enemy hands. The great Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean was built, eventually, to prevent future Arab pirates from imperiling American and western commerce, political interests, and democracy. The current situation is not unlike the past.

If the United States is going to avoid future warfare and the decimation of its economy, we are going to have to make alliances with other democracies in Europe. Trying to build a fortress America, and cut Europe adrift, is not merely dumb but it is also counterproductive. It is a losing strategy for those who truly wish to see America as a transcendent and successful world leader.

We should not be negotiating with Hamas, Hezbollah, or Iran at all. We must set our lines in the sand and respect those lines. Teddy Roosevelt's admonition to, "speak softly and carry a big stick," has all but been forgotten. As has been written, our President speaks loudly and carries a small stick He talks tough, issuing threats and offering ominous advice to dictators, but rarely follows through with action. The bad guys are able to figure out very quickly who they should be afraid of and who they can ignore.

Warmongering is not the answer to Donald Trump. However, a consistent, understandable, and preeminent approach to the place of America in the world is crucial. One of the core elements of American greatness is not being intimidated by or negotiating with terrorists. Never ever must that happen. We are doing that right now, and we will regret it not only in Gaza but also in future conflicts that America will inevitably face.

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