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Middle East: Peace in the Middle East? Not if Türkiye Has its Way

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TÜRKIYE WILL ATTEMPT OVER THE COMING MONTHS to trigger breakdowns in the Israel-Gaza peace accords, finalized and signed in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, on October 13, 2025, without either of the combatant parties — Israel and HAMAS — participating.

In a sense, Türkiye, under its present neo-Ottomanist trajectory and ambitions, has no alternative but to ensure that the accords break down, and Israel is forced to respond, providing another opportunity for it to be painted the aggressor.

But, equally important in the near-term is the question: Will Turkish Pres. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's October 13, 2025, blockage of Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu

from attending the Sharm el-Sheikh peace talks — deciding the success of the Gaza peace accord — prove sufficient to blunt US Pres. Donald Trump’s warming relationship with Mr Erdoğan?

At the very least, Pres. Erdoğan has now signaled that his war against Israel, conducted through HAMAS and other front groups, will continue. He has already signaled that he intended to take over Iran’s diplomatic space in Syria and Lebanon. Iran is now, essentially, out of the Gaza picture following its defeats in both the Iranian space and in Lebanon and Syria. It was never the primary actor supporting HAMAS, in any event; it was merely a convenient ally when the Iranian clerics waged their own separate war against Israel.

On [October 1, 2025](#), we published a report entitled “Iran Faces a New World: Will it, Can it, Take the Mighty Leap?”, which suggested that Iran, geopolitically, had now lost its rationale for its war against Israel and the US. But are Iran’s ruling clerics ready to seize the opportunity to transform their strategic posture, even to the point of possibly saving the clerical administration? If not, then they risk overthrow or collapse to an ever-greater degree.

So whether the Turkish President succeeded or not in keeping Netanyahu from the talks — as he did — became a secondary issue to the reality that Erdoğan intends to play a spoiling rôle in the US President’s Middle East plans. This cannot be too highly stressed. Moreover, the Turkish efforts, continuing to gain momentum, are part of a package of regional confrontations with Greece, Cyprus, Lebanon, and Iran, as well as Israel.

Prime Minister Netanyahu did not attend the talks which followed the implementation of the initial phase of the Gaza peace agreement earlier that day, even though Pres. Trump had asked him to attend the Sharm el-Sheikh talks. Mr Netanyahu said that he had decided to stay in Israel to participate in the Jewish holiday of Simchat Torah. It was a convenient excuse.

The talks in Egypt, hosted by the Egyptian President, included numerous Arab leaders, some of who agreed that the Israeli Prime Minister should not attend the gathering. Even the heavy pressures on some Arab leaders to prefer Netanyahu’s “non-attendance” was a sign of the importance still attached to Türkiye’s pressures.

This souring of relations came immediately after the ceremonies marking the withdrawal of Israel Defense Force (IDF) troops to the first-phase ceasefire line, still inside Gaza, and the handing over by HAMAS of the last 20 live Israeli hostages held by HAMAS since their kidnapping on October 7, 2023.

US Pres. Donald Trump flew to Sharm el-Sheikh for the follow-on peace talks.

Pres. Trump was hailed as the key factor in bringing about the peace, supported by his chief negotiator, Steven Witkoff and Pres. Trump’s son-in-law, Jared Kushner, and daughter Ivanka Trump (wife of Mr Kushner) drawing widespread public acclaim from Israeli and Palestinian crowds alike, when he appeared at the events in Israel on October 13, 2025. Mr Trump also addressed the Israeli *Knesset*, where he was invested with Israel’s highest civilian award, the Presidential Medal of Honor.

The peace agreement was, in itself, a major strategic setback for Pres. Erdoğan, who has been the principal backer, supplier, and organizer of HAMAS in Gaza and elsewhere. Although Western media has blamed Iran as the major HAMAS backer, it has always, in fact, been Türkiye which sponsored and provided political cover to HAMAS. It was not so much that HAMAS lost the war with Israel; it was that Türkiye lost the war with Israel *through* Ankara’s proxy, HAMAS.

HAMAS is a creation of the Islamic Brotherhood (*Ikhwan*), which is based in Türkiye, and the Erdoğan Government, now virtually bankrupt, is a Muslim Brotherhood Administration. Pres. Trump had clearly gone to great measures to induce Pres. Erdoğan to support the peace agreement, including hinting at allowing Türkiye to acquire the US Lockheed Martin F-35A *Lightning II* fighter and the latest version of the F-16 fighter.

But Mr Erdoğan's threat to Egyptian Pres. Abdul Fatah Saeed Hussein Khalil al-Sisi to forbid Prime Minister Netanyahu from visiting Cairo for the summit — made by the Turkish President while his flight was preparing to land in Sharm el-Sheikh — signaled that the Turkish Government was now prepared to “get back into the game” of confronting Israel and, therefore, the US.

In this regard, he is very much supporting the prospects of Russia being able to re-enter the great game in the Eastern Mediterranean and Levant. As ever, Mr Erdoğan is playing the East off against the West; he is no more a loyal member of NATO than he is a loyal member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Erdoğan's domestic position remains highly challenged, with the Turkish economy continuing to crumble, even as Türkiye continues to pursue major defense expenditures and deployments. It is still questionable as to how long the Turkish economy can continue to sustain Mr Erdoğan's Government, and *that* may be the limiting factor on the longevity of Türkiye as a threat to his regional neighbors, but the new Trump-appointed US Ambassador to Türkiye, Thomas J. Barrack, is becoming regarded as an advocate for Türkiye rather than acknowledging the broader US strategic needs in the Eastern Mediterranean, Middle East, and Red Sea/Horn of Africa.

Either way, Türkiye will act as a spoiler in the Levant. It will continue its attempts to control the Syrian Government and to assume *de facto* power in Lebanon. It's not over by a long shot.
