Hamas accepted Gaza cease-fire for 'tactical, strategic' reasons: Veteran diplomat

Missing pieces of Trump's plan

US President Donald Trump, who since returning to the White House has given the green light to Israel's relentless attacks on the Gaza Strip and even teamed up with its prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, in widening the scope of the conflict to include Iran, recently unveiled what he calls a "20-Point Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict" — a plan that has already been partly rolled out.

The plan, which was announced on September 29, 2025, aims for an immediate cease-fire, reconstruction of Gaza, and a framework for lasting peace. Its various provisions include cease-fire and release of captives, disarmament of Hamas, humanitarian aid, reopening of borders, establishment of an interim Gaza government, economic reconstruction, reforms within the Palestinian Authority, and political

Although President Trump talked up the plan's significance in the Sharm el-Sheikh summit attended by several world leaders, over half a century of historical experience leaves little room for optimism about its actual implementation.

Hossein Jaberi Ansari, who is a veteran Iranian diplomat, senior foreign policy expert, and the CEO of the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), discussed the challenges facing this plan and the historical lessons that have brought realism into play as an essential element in analyzing the current situation in Gaza in a comprehensive interview. Below is a translated extract from that conversation:

In truth, this plan is a reaction to Israel's self-defeating war and an attempt to put an end to it. So, Trump's plan shouldn't be viewed as a genuinely American initiative put forward under normal circumstances; It's more of a political addendum to the military campaign -an effort to stop the war, ease mounting pressure on the US and the international order, get a handle on the unprecedented global tide of opinion turning against Israel and its backers, and steerinternational conflicts toward US interests.

Let's kick off the interview with President Trump's 20-point plan, which the US President himself has called a "historic" plan for peace. Many questions have been raised about its details; The first perhaps being: In your view, what sets this plan apart from previous ones?

JABERI ANSARI: Aside from the fact that Mr. Trump usually goes overboard in describing his own actions, if we take a realistic look at the plan and what the President did in recent days, we would see that the plan isn't particularly well thought out. In fact, it's not a fresh initiative at all. Rather than being proactive, it's a reaction to Israel's two-year war against Gaza. So, it's hard to paint a picture of a comprehensive, innovative blueprint backed by a well-organized, preplanned measure — even though naturally, some elements of that are present. Still, we need to bear in mind the background that gave rise to this plan.

During the two-year Gaza war and Israel's brutal assaults, over 80% of Gaza's buildings and infrastructure were destroyed. Around 70,000 people were confirmed dead, with many more likely still buried under the rubble, a number that could push the toll even higher. Nearly 10% of Gaza's population — roughly 2.2 million before the war — were killed or injured.

In my view, despite two years of bloodshed and destruction, Israel did everything it possibly could militarily and achieved whatever results it could. That massive devastation was part of that outcome. Yet politicalthat keeps being dug yet never reaches water. For two years, we witnessed state-sponsored terror, horror, and destruction — but where were the political gains? Did the other side surrender? Not at all. Neither the Palestinian nation, which stood its ground with a possibly unprecedented resilience, nor the armed Resistance Axis, which kept up its operations until the last days before the cease-fire, gave in.

The question was: How long could this war drag on? From the viewpoint of Israel's ruling right-wing factions, backed by the social base that it has, the war must continue until all Palestinians are annihilated or, at least, forced into total submission. That sums up the short-sighted and fruitless outlook of Israel's far-right establishment.

international actors, the US, and global policymakers, the continuance of this war, considering all its damaging ramifications in world public opinion, brought to light the deep contradictions in the Western and American slogans and plans. It ran counter to broader US interests on international conflicts in West Asia and on the global stage. So, it simply couldn't have dragged on indefinitely, and something had to be done to wrap it up.

In truth, this plan is a reaction to that situation and an attempt to put an end to it. So, Trump's plan shouldn't be viewed as a genuinely American initiative put forward under normal circumstances; It's more of a political addendum to the military campaign — an effort to

Iran, in October 2025. But from the standpoint of ternational order, get a handle on the unprecedented global tide of opinion turning against Israel and its backers, and steer

> US interests. Now, how much chance does this reactionary plan have of success? What could make it different from previous proposals? And does Washington even have the political will to push it toward a lasting peace?

international conflicts toward

The biggest obstacle, in this and any other plan, lies in ignoring the fundamental realities on the ground in Palestine. Two main issues stand out: first, that for decades an entire nation has been fighting for its right to self-determination — a

only major unresolved issue carried over from the last century, now well into this one.

At the heart of this crisis lies a nation whose existence, identity, and rights have been denied by the Zionist movement, yet it still continues to fight for those basic human and political rights. Any plan that touches on Palestine must come to grips with this fundamental issue. I'm not saying international proposals must necessarily accept everything Palestinians demand, but for any plan to have a fighting chance at success, it must at least pay heed to this central reality.

The second, no less crucial, issue — one that receives far less attention in Iran or elsewhere is the situation inside Israel itself: its internal dynamics and how they play into the notion of peace, including the so-called "two-state solution".

A major transformation has taken place within Israeli society, one that has shaken up the entire political and cabinet structure — yet it's often overlooked. This change has unfolded over the past two decades, though analysts still tend to look back on it through outdated lenses.

We know that Israel was built on immigration. The native Jewish population of Palestine at the start of this decades-long conflict was very small, a mere fraction of the inhabitants, while the overwhelming majority were Arab Palestinians - mostly Muslims, with a smaller Christian community. Iews were present too, but they formed a tiny proportion.

The occupying Israeli entity grew out of the close connection between Jewish settlement movements and immigration from all corners of the world to Israel. In this sense, Israel is not a historically formed society but one still in the making, constantly shaping itself throughout the decades of conflict — through two means: an influx of new immigrants and natural population growth.

Those immigrants who came to Palestine and, through Zionist settlement construction, took over the land and brought about the Israeli entity came mainly from two sources: Jews of Western origin (the so-called Ashkenazim) and those from the East (Oriental or Mizrahi Jews).

This divide gave rise to a deep social and ethnic rift within Israeli society — effectively a racial cleavage among the Jews of Israel. The people who set up Israel and led its earliest waves of migration and settlement were predominantly Western

(Ashkenazi) Jews. The Israeli Labor Party which founded Israel, fought its first wars, and ran the show for decades after its creation - has always been dominated by Ashkenazi Jews. The overwhelming majority of the founders of the Zionist movement were also Western Jews. Though there were Eastern Jews as well, they remained minorities within both the Zionist and Israeli political systems until just a couple of decades ago. Two developments over the past 20 years have changed the game. First, the reservoir of Western Jews has essentially run dry. Those still living in Europe or America are no longer eager to take up permanent residence in Israel. At most,





Jewish refugees arrive in Palestine aboard the Theodor Herzl as it docks at the port of Haifa in April 1947. The banner on the side of the ship proclaims, "The Germans destroyed our families and homes — don't you destroy our hopes.