

Channeling Shakespeare, Biden leverages Iran threat to push Israel into surrendering to Hamas

By Lev Tsitrin

Biden and Khamenei would make for very strange bedfellows indeed. And yet, consider the message of the [headline](#), *"Biden says Iran could hold off on Israel attack if Gaza deal reached."*

Clearly, Biden tells Israel, "To avoid an attack from Hezbollah and Iran, agree to the ceasefire."

How did we get to where Biden's case is helped by Iran's threat to Israel?

There is plenty to unpack here, so let's see what the ceasefire means for whom – and accordingly, who wants it, and who doesn't.

Biden wants one thing, and one thing only: a quiet election campaign – originally for himself, and now, for Harris. He does not want campus protests, he does not want demonstrations at the Democratic convention, he does not want democrats to lose the votes of the "uncommitted." To him, Gaza ceasefire is not about the Middle East at all; it is not about Israel, it is not about Hamas – it is all about Democrats winning in November.

For Israel, it is all about the hostages. There is no motivation other than getting them out of Gaza. Israel's other aim – the destruction of Hamas – does not need a ceasefire at all. Hence, Israel's insistence that ceasefire should be

temporary, and not lead to winding down of the war on Hamas. In that, Israel's vision of ceasefire diverges sharply from Biden's.

Hamas wants a ceasefire as the first step of ending the war – it wants it to ensure its survival and recovery. Hence, it wants the ceasefire to be permanent – just as Biden does – so Hamas's vision of ceasefire is fully in line with Biden's.

Hamas's reason is also the Hezbollah's and Iran's reason to want a ceasefire – but on top of that, they have their own, separate goals: they both badly need to backpedal on the threats they made against Israel in the wake of the killings of Hamas' political chief in Tehran, and of Hezbollah's military chief in Beirut. Both realize that Lebanon and Iran are houses made of glass, and have much to lose for breaking a few Israeli windows. Iran has a hugely advanced nuclear program that is ripe for destruction, and the export of its main source of revenue – oil – can be easily disrupted. Likewise, for all the damage that Hezbollah's rocket arsenal can inflict on Israel, Israel will in response bomb Lebanon into stone age. So, there is a huge benefit for both in playing Biden's game, and stepping back, all the more that it would allow them to claim a huge diplomatic victory over Israel – the victory of saving Hamas without firing a shot.

Yet, Hamas may not necessarily see it that way, though. Its big dream on October 7 – and its obvious calculation – was that Iran and Hezbollah would join it in attacking Israel, so Israel faced a full-blown war of annihilation on all fronts, including from the West Bank and from Israel's own Arab population. This did not happen, but hope dies last. Hence, paradoxically, Hamas' messianic leadership may well see its current tribulations as a critical step towards Israel's destruction with the help of Hezbollah and Iran, and would rather not have a ceasefire if it means that such join attack would not materialize. Hence, Hamas is not sending a delegation to the upcoming round of talks. Though this refusal

is couched as Hamas' "take it or leave it" ultimatum to Israel – accept that you lost the war, and pull out of Gaza – there is also a message to Iran and Hezbollah: we want you to attack Israel, and are willing to let the ceasefire effort fail. Since the only purpose of our survival is to destroy Israel – why not do it now?



"Misery acquaints a man with strange bedfellows," observed the Bard, and there is plenty of misery all around the Middle East, and not just in Gaza, Israel, and Lebanon. Plus, the anti-Israel protesters spread it to the White House, too. So, it is interesting to observe how strangely the interests align, and mis-align. Iran and Hezbollah are doing Biden's bidding, and Biden doing theirs; and, on the question of ceasefire, Hamas would rather not have it, just like Israel – though for an exactly opposite reason than Israel's, and for that matter Iran's and Hezbollah's. It is a very strange knot of coinciding, and contradicting interests of enemies and friends. Shakespeare could not have invented a better, and

stranger, plot.