

Donald Trump ha forzato l'accordo di cessate il fuoco che l'amministrazione Biden si è rifiutata di sottoscrivere?

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Il presidente eletto degli Stati Uniti Donald Trump ha avvertito la scorsa settimana che se gli ostaggi israeliani a Gaza non saranno rilasciati, "Non sarà un bene per Hamas e non sarà un bene, francamente, per nessuno. Scoppierà l'inferno. Non devo dire altro, ma è così".

Questa affermazione sta assumendo proporzioni molto più grandi in quanto potrebbe essere a portata di mano un accordo di cessate il fuoco per porre fine una volta per tutte al genocidio a Gaza e portare allo scambio di ostaggi detenuti da entrambe le parti (il termine "ostaggi" è appropriato per i prigionieri palestinesi detenuti da Israele, anche se è raramente utilizzato).

Al momento, ci sono più domande che risposte sul potenziale cessate il fuoco. Innanzitutto, il Primo Ministro israeliano lo accetterà? Quali sono state le reazioni in Israele? Donald Trump ha effettivamente fatto pendere la bilancia per far finalmente arrivare il cessate il fuoco? Quali sono le prospettive che il cessate il fuoco diventi permanente?

Queste domande hanno gravi implicazioni a lungo termine e alcune di esse offrono persino un certo grado di speranza.

Netanyahu dirà finalmente sì?

I contorni di base dell'accordo di cessate il fuoco proposto sono essenzialmente quelli che il presidente degli Stati Uniti uscente Joe Biden ha esposto lo scorso maggio, quando ha falsamente affermato che si trattava di un piano israeliano. Hamas lo ha accettato allora, e Netanyahu ha detto di no.

Questa volta, sembra che Netanyahu ci stia pensando più seriamente. Hamas ha già dato il suo consenso all'accordo di nuovo approvando la bozza di proposta senza commenti, il che significa che non hanno chiesto modifiche. Stanno aspettando i dettagli del piano di ritiro di Israele prima di dare la loro approvazione finale.

Netanyahu ha già incontrato i ministri di estrema destra Itamar Ben Gvir e Bezalel Smotrich. Entrambi hanno pubblicamente inveito su quanto sia orribile l'accordo, ma, cosa fondamentale, Ben Gvir ha dichiarato che non farebbe cadere il governo se l'accordo andasse in porto. In termini politici israeliani, ciò significa che lascerebbe la coalizione ma continuerebbe a sostenerla in votazioni chiave, come i voti di sfiducia, dall'esterno della coalizione.

Smotrich was slow to declare that he would leave the government, prompting Ben Gvir to call on him to do so.

Netanyahu now knows his government will survive a ceasefire agreement. That shift has combined with Trump's pressure to end the genocide before he takes office to make Netanyahu more agreeable to the deal.

Until he actually says yes, however, it is not a guarantee. Netanyahu remains concerned with his legal troubles and so the need to remain in office under crisis conditions is still there for him. He would also be weaker politically without the far right in his coalition if he continues to pursue his "judicial reforms," which is underway again these days. Centrist parties will support him over the ceasefire, but other initiatives, including the ongoing controversy over drafting ultra-Orthodox Israelis into the military and the attack on the Israeli courts will continue to threaten his government.

The calculus for Netanyahu has changed to one more favorable toward ending the genocide. But there are still incentives for him to reject the deal.

Did Trump really make the difference, and what does his involvement mean?

Trump's "unleash hell" statement was a surprisingly clever ploy. He made it sound as if he was threatening Hamas, when he was actually pressing Netanyahu.

The threat is meaningless to Hamas in the context of the horrific genocide that Gaza has been experiencing. Given the massive devastation and death that Israel, with full American backing, has wreaked upon Gaza, what more could Trump possibly do?

In reality, Trump's claim exposed the hollowness of the pro-Israel, pro-genocide crowd that has repeatedly called for "more pressure" on Hamas rather than on Israel. From the day Israel's onslaught began, Hamas has been under maximum pressure, as they have suffered massive losses in personnel, equipment, and support among Palestinians. Even if one believes that Hamas is indifferent to the civilian suffering in Gaza, that is as much pressure as could possibly be brought to bear. That's why Hamas has been ready to agree to this deal since at least the first ceasefire in November 2023.

Trump, or some on his team, may have recognized that they had no leverage over Hamas, nor was any necessary. The leverage they had was over Netanyahu, a man who, despite his support for Trump, is not very warmly regarded by the incoming president.

Trump held Netanyahu at least partly to blame for the October 7 attack by Hamas, and famously accused Netanyahu of disloyalty, even saying "Fuck him" back in December 2021.

While feelings seem to have warmed in recent months with Netanyahu's obvious support for Trump over Joe Biden, Trump is particularly sensitive to the widespread belief that he can be manipulated by others, with Netanyahu being a prime example. It is not a

coincidence that Trump shared a video on his Truth Social account last week that was sharply critical of Netanyahu and painted a conspiratorial picture of how the United States is manipulated into wars by Israel.

Trump sharing that video sent a clear message to Netanyahu and to the American public that he intends to make the decisions about U.S. foreign policy.

With all of this behind him, Trump's Mideast envoy, Steve Witkoff, had a lot of leverage in his meetings with Netanyahu. Given that Israel's position on the ceasefire talks seemed to soften rapidly after those talks, it would seem Witkoff used it well.

Without knowing what was said in those meetings, it is impossible to say whether there were promises made if Netanyahu agreed to Trump's wishes, threats issued, or, most likely, some combination of both.

What is abundantly clear, however, is that Joe Biden and Antony Blinken's repeated claims that "they can't tell Israel what to do" were just as bogus as their detractors have repeatedly claimed all along. Clearly, Trump could and did use his leverage over Netanyahu to push him toward the agreement. True, we have still to see whether that push was enough to actually get Netanyahu to an agreement, but the combination of the changed regional environment, the growing support in Israel for an end to what they call a war, and pressure being applied on Netanyahu for the first time since this all began have had a very significant effect.

Even if Netanyahu agrees, will the ceasefire last?

If Netanyahu does agree to the ceasefire, he has every reason to see it through at least until the first stage of the hostage exchange is complete. All the same incentives that would lead him to agree in the first place will remain until that is done.

Those factors cover the first phase of the agreement, which will take six weeks to complete. After that, the far-right flank has warned they will become more active in their opposition to the rest of the deal.

Still, if Netanyahu does not complete the full hostage exchange, he will have to be very convincing in telling the Israeli public that it is Hamas that is breaching the deal. It won't be an easy sell, as Hamas seems prepared to do whatever is necessary to uphold a ceasefire. But because details of that second phase are supposed to be worked out during Phase I, there will be plenty of opportunities to sink the deal.

It is the third stage of the ceasefire agreement, which offers no further gains to Israel but is focused on rebuilding Gaza and reconstituting some sort of governing authority there, that Netanyahu and the far-right would most like to thwart. If the hostages are freed and fighting resumes at that point, attention from both Washington and the Israeli public will be significantly diminished.

Whether he torpedoed the deal or not will depend on what, if anything, Israel and the Trump administration envision for Gaza going forward. Is Trump willing to allow Netanyahu to appease his far-right flank and build new Jewish-only settlements in Gaza? Does Trump still cling to being able to use Gaza to build a seaside resort, as his son-in-law, Jared Kushner once suggested? Are they willing to allow a Palestinian leadership, or even elections, in Gaza?

This part is too far down the road for easy predictions now, but these questions may be answered by a renewed effort by Trump to broker a normalization agreement between Israel and Saudi Arabia, something Biden tried very hard and utterly failed to do. That will be very tempting for Trump, and the conditions the Saudi leadership, starting with Crown prince Mohammed Bin Salman (MBS)—with whom Trump has a smoother relationship than he does with Netanyahu—will have to include a commitment to a Palestinian state and a Palestinian leadership in Gaza.

That vision was emphasized by outgoing U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken in his speech on Tuesday. “Israel will have to accept reuniting Gaza and the West Bank under the leadership of a reformed PA. And all must embrace a time-bound, conditions-based path toward forming an independent Palestinian state. These principles are mutually reinforcing,” Blinken told the Atlantic Council.

Netanyahu has enjoyed demonizing the quisling Palestinian Authority, but they are currently strengthening their case for having a significant role in Gaza by performing their accustomed role as enforcers of Israel’s occupation in Jenin. The PA’s crackdown on militant groups in the West Bank city and surrounding areas is, in part, meant to convince the Trump administration and Arab leaders that they can “control” the remaining people in Gaza.

The talks about Gaza’s future will have to include the PA, and Netanyahu’s reaction to that will tell us much about the prospects of governance in Gaza, where no option that could realistically lead to Palestinian freedom is likely to be pursued. Beyond that, the need for real representation, as chosen by the people of Palestine, continues to be beyond the consideration of any of the state parties involved, western or Middle Eastern.

Soprattutto, Trump vuole vedere la regione del Medio Oriente tornare al suo stato relativamente quiescente, e c’è ragione di credere che otterrà il suo desiderio. Iran, Hezbollah, Iraq e Siria hanno tutti le loro questioni interne di cui occuparsi. Israele ha efficacemente contrastato ogni possibilità di attacchi significativi contro di lui da parte di uno qualsiasi di quei paesi, e, se azioni del genere dovessero essere lanciate in futuro, ciò avverrà dopo che sarà trascorso abbastanza tempo per riorganizzarsi, riarmarsi e sviluppare una strategia migliore di quelle che Israele ha sconfitto così brutalmente nel 2024.

Questo si adatta bene a Trump. Non vuole dover spendere tempo ed energie in complicati affari esteri, specialmente nei primi giorni della sua amministrazione. Il suo obiettivo, spera, sarà quello di spingere la sua agenda interna, riorganizzando il governo

per dare al Presidente più controllo e libertà e soffocando le vie per il dissenso .

Netanyahu sembra avere anche questo senso. Chiaramente, Witkoff è stato in grado di fare pressione su Netanyahu con incentivi, positivi o negativi, e il leader israeliano sa benissimo che Trump non ha né la zelante devozione ideologica verso Israele né le pressioni politiche che aveva Joe Biden.

Ma se Netanyahu verrà convinto a portare a termine il cessate il fuoco, qualunque carota e bastone Witkoff abbia usato dovrà avere un effetto ancora più convincente e vigoroso. Resta da vedere se Trump è disposto ad arrivare a tanto, e potenzialmente rischiare di far arrabbiare la sua considerevole base di sostenitori sionisti cristiani, così come altri importanti donatori repubblicani come Miriam Adelson. È particolarmente preoccupante perché, entro sei settimane, Trump potrebbe avere molto meno interesse per questo cessate il fuoco.

Netanyahu non vuole irritare Trump, soprattutto all'inizio del suo mandato, ma probabilmente si aspetta che, se placa Trump ora, ci saranno opportunità per Israele di affermare la propria volontà nella regione in futuro. In questo, probabilmente ha ragione.