



Israel-Palestine: The Risks of A Second Trump Presidency

“The Israeli right would have full White House backing for their wildest fantasies – a judicial coup, West Bank annexation, settlements in Gaza, endless violence, and military confrontations with both Hezbollah and Iran.” – *Jeremy Ben-Ami, J Street President*

President Trump’s first term upended America’s stabilizing role in the Middle East. Far-right hawks and settlement movement advocates set policy while a reckless, impulsive president took the helm.

Trump broke sharply with previous administrations, [abandoning](#) historic bipartisan support for a two-state solution and realigning US policy with the Israeli settlement movement and the Israeli right.



The White House timed policy announcements for Israeli elections, delivering what the *New York Times* [described](#) as “political prizes” which Netanyahu then campaigned on, boosting him “in three straight reelection campaigns.”

Trump reversed [decades of policy](#) holding settlements to be a violation of international law, [supercharging settlement construction](#) on occupied land – with the “Trump Heights” settlement even [named after him](#). In the administration’s final year, Jared Kushner rolled out a “peace plan” described by experts as a “[smokescreen](#)” for annexing West Bank territory and cementing permanent, undemocratic control over millions of Palestinians.

“It’s not about peace or security. It is not about being pro-Israel. It is about undercutting Israel’s future in service of Trump’s personal politics.” – *Joe Biden, 2019*

President Trump delivered punishment after punishment to the moderate Palestinian leaders Israel relies upon for stability in the West Bank, empowering their extremist rivals. He [shuttered diplomatic offices](#) and [cut all funding](#) for aid, development and coexistence programs.

He [shredded](#) President Obama’s Iran deal out of spite, [paving the way](#) for Iran to become a threshold nuclear state and sparking escalation that brought us to the brink of all-out war – a catastrophic risk for Israel.



“The first term set a new baseline. With war in Gaza, tensions sky-high, and the most extreme government in Israel’s history, a second term is a recipe for disaster.”

– *Jeremy Ben-Ami, J Street President*



What to Expect from a Second Trump Term:

No Red Lines in Gaza and the West Bank

In Gaza, Trump has pledged no red lines, with his party attacking ceasefire and hostage deal proponents. Netanyahu will be free to pursue endless conflict and occupation while his allies [press to build settlements](#).

In the West Bank, Trump will align with far-right Israeli ministers seeking to force the collapse of the Palestinian Authority so that Israel can assert total control. [Former IDF Generals say](#) this would be an impossible security challenge, with extremists “rubbing their hands together in anticipation.”

Supercharged Settlement Construction, A Green Light for Annexation

Trump will again reverse US opposition to settlement growth while delivering a green light for annexation. Netanyahu has pledged to ramp up settlement construction and advance annexation as part of his government’s coalition agreement, and is already taking [major steps](#) to cement this.

“This is an alliance between two criminal suspects who’ve conjured up a plan that compromises our security and our future. Annexation will cost us dearly.” – [Yair Golan, Fmr. IDF Deputy Chief](#)

Crackdowns on Pro-Palestinian and Pro-Peace Advocacy

Echoing his response to the George Floyd protests, Donald Trump and GOP leaders [are promising to crush](#) pro-Palestinian protests, deport protesters, target pro-peace and pro-Palestinian advocacy groups and “set that movement back 25 or 30 years.”

White House Support for Netanyahu’s Anti-Democratic Judicial Coup

Trump and Netanyahu, both facing criminal indictments, are following the same authoritarian playbook to stay out of prison: Attack the judiciary and pursue a permanent lock on power. Netanyahu’s [judicial “reform” package](#) and Trump’s [Project 2025](#) seek to expand executive power, shield leaders from accountability, remove democratic safeguards and reverse protections for minorities

JD Vance has championed a political alliance between Republicans and the Israeli far-right, [describing it](#) as a “real opportunity” and appearing as a guest of honor at the Israeli Conservative Political Action Conference.

The Risk of All-Out War with Hezbollah and Iran

An Israel-Hezbollah war would be disastrous, potentially swiftly overwhelming Israel’s missile defense systems. While Biden has pressed for restraint, deterred Hezbollah, and assigned high-level officials to the file, Trump’s Israeli political allies are [relishing the opportunity](#) to “change the rules of the game” with “all-out war.” As a senior US official [told CNN](#), managing to hold back conflict for this long “has been a miracle.”

A US-Iran war would be even more catastrophic, dwarfing the Iraq war and engulfing the entire region, including Israel. Trump already brought us to the [brink of war in 2020](#). Now, with hawks back in charge, no nuclear deal in place, and the Middle East more unstable than ever, all-out war is an all-too-real possibility.