

Why Every Peace Plan Fails: Understanding the 2017 “Softening” That Wasn’t

1. The World on Edge: Iran, Israel, and the Collapse of Ceasefires

On February 28, 2026, the world changed overnight. The United States and Israel launched coordinated airstrikes on hundreds of targets in Iran, killing Supreme Leader Khamenei and senior Iranian military leaders. Iran retaliated with massive missile and drone strikes against Israel and US bases across the Middle East, closing the Strait of Hormuz and plunging the region into chaos. Hezbollah opened a new front in Lebanon. No ceasefire is in sight. Iran declared the attack “an act of war” and has refused further negotiations.

2. Iran: Hamas’s Chief Patron and the Embodiment of Why Peace Fails

Iran’s fingerprints are everywhere in this conflict. As Hamas’s chief patron, Iran has armed, trained, and funded the group for decades, enabling its attacks and shaping its uncompromising ideology. The events of 2026 are a living illustration of why every peace plan fails: when the driving force is not just politics, but a theology that sees compromise as betrayal, negotiations are doomed before they begin.

3. The 1988 Hamas Charter: What It Actually Says

The original 1988 Hamas Charter is unambiguous:

“Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it.”

Waqf Doctrine (Article 11):

“The land of Palestine is an Islamic Waqf consecrated for future Moslem generations until Judgement Day. It, or any part of it, should not be squandered: it, or any part of it, should not be given up.”

1988: NO COMPROMISE	2017: TACTICAL SHIFT
• Israel will exist until Islam obliterates it • Jihad to reclaim all of Palestine • No recognition of Israel • Islamic State from the river to the sea	• Armed resistance remains legitimate • Accepts a Palestinian state on 1967 borders • Temporarily agrees to ceasefire • Still rejects Israel's legitimacy

The Language Changed; The Goals Did Not.

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On Peace (Article 13):

“There is no solution for the Palestinian question except through Jihad. Initiatives, and so-called peaceful solutions and international conferences, are in contradiction to the principles of the Islamic Resistance Movement.”

On Martyrdom (Article 8):

“Jihad is its path and death for the sake of Allah is the loftiest of its wishes.”

This is not simply political rhetoric—it is a religious worldview that frames the conflict as a sacred duty.

4. The 2017 “Softening”: What Changed, What Didn’t

In 2017, Hamas released a new “Document of General Principles and Policies.” Many in the West hoped this signaled a shift. But did it?

What changed:

- The document drops the explicit “obliterate Israel” language.
- It claims the conflict is with “the Zionist project,” not Jews as Jews.
- It says Hamas would accept a Palestinian state on the 1967 borders as a “national consensus”—but never recognizes Israel’s right to exist.

What didn’t change:

- Palestine is still described as “an indivisible territorial unit” that “cannot be ceded.”
- Armed resistance is still affirmed as a “right and strategic option.”
- Israel is called “a racist, anti-human and colonial Zionist project.”
- “Hamas confirms that no part of the land of Palestine shall be compromised or conceded, irrespective of the causes, the circumstances and the pressures...”

Side-by-Side Comparison

Theme	1988 Charter	2017 Document
Israel's Existence	"Israel will exist... until Islam will obliterate it."	Never recognizes Israel; calls it "a racist, anti-human and colonial Zionist project."
Waqf Theology	"Palestine is an Islamic Waqf... should not be given up."	"Palestine is an indivisible territorial unit... no part can be ceded."
Negotiations	"No solution... except through Jihad."	Accepts 1967 borders as a "national consensus" (tactical, not ideological).
Violence	Jihad and martyrdom are glorified.	"Armed resistance" is a right and duty.

The 2017 document is a tactical shift in language, not a substantive change in ideology or goals.

5. Waqf Theology: The Root Barrier to Peace

At the heart of the impasse is waqf theology. For Hamas, all of historic Palestine is a religious trust (*waqf*) that cannot be negotiated away. To cede any part is to betray Islam itself. This is not just a political stance—it's a theological nonstarter.

As a Jewish pastor in Jerusalem explained, when you read the Hamas Charter, you see that their position is not just political, it is religious. For them, the land is a waqf, a religious trust, and no leader has the authority to give up even a meter. That's why negotiations always fail. It's not about borders, it's about theology.

6. Real-Life Testimony: A Jewish believer

"As you probably know, Israel has launched a preemptive strike against Iran together with the United States. Of course, we have already felt the consequences, and we are staying at home close to a protected shelter. As of now, I haven't been called up for reserve duty, but we are on standby in case we are mobilized to guard Israel's borders."

"We are grateful for your prayers, and we join you in praying as well for the Iranian people. There are so many people in Iran who are suffering under the cruel regime currently in power. We are praying for their salvation—not only physical, but spiritual as well."

"We are also praying for our pilots, soldiers, commanders, and leaders—that God would save them and grant them a spirit of courage and wisdom."

“Finally, we pray that God will receive the glory. That He would open people’s eyes to see that it is not by the power of the IDF, nor the U.S. military, nor Netanyahu, nor Trump—but only by God’s power and by His grace that we succeed.”

7. Real-Life Testimony: A Jewish Pastor in Jerusalem

A Jewish pastor serving in Jerusalem shared that, in the wake of the Iran attack, families are sleeping in the church because their homes are in the line of fire. Restrictions on gatherings have changed daily life. He drew a parallel to the Book of Esther, noting that the threats against Israel today echo those faced in ancient Persia (modern Iran): the same spirit that wanted to destroy the Jewish people then is still at work now. He emphasized the need to pray not only for Israel’s soldiers and leaders, but also for the people of Iran, many of whom suffer under their own regime. Even as sirens sound and families run to shelters, he reminds his congregation that God is their protector, and that faith—not fear—must rule their hearts.

8. Biblical Insight: The Spiritual Battle

Scripture reminds us that the conflict is not merely political or military, but spiritual:

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.” (Ephesians 6:12)

Like Daniel, we are called to intercede for our people and our world (Daniel 9). We pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6), knowing that Jerusalem will be “a burdensome stone for all peoples” (Zechariah 12:3).

9. Why Christians Must Pray Differently

Every peace plan fails because the foundation is not political; it is theological. As long as Hamas believes the land is a waqf, there can be no compromise. No leader can sign away what they believe belongs to Allah. Negotiations are seen as a weakness by those who hold to this theology. They will agree to a truce if it helps them, but never to real peace. It is a cycle that repeats.

This means our prayers must go beyond asking for another peace conference. We must pray for transformation—of hearts, of worldviews, of spiritual strongholds. We pray for the salvation of all peoples, for the restraint of evil, and for God’s glory to be revealed.

10. Prayer Points for the Week

- Pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6).
- Pray for protection and wisdom for Israel's leaders, soldiers, and civilians.
- Pray for the Iranian people—both for their physical safety and spiritual salvation.
- Pray for families displaced or living in fear, that they would find shelter and hope in God.
- Pray for the restraint of evil and the breaking of spiritual strongholds that perpetuate hatred and violence.
- Pray for the Church in Israel and the region to be a light of hope, faith, and love.

Father, we confess that human efforts alone cannot bring true peace. We ask You to intervene in the hearts of leaders and peoples across the Middle East. Protect the innocent, comfort the fearful, and restrain those who seek destruction. Open eyes to see that victory comes not by might, nor by power, but by Your Spirit. May Your name be glorified, and may Your peace reign in Jerusalem and beyond. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Next: Part 4 – From Conviction to Action: When Knowledge Becomes Responsibility (March 24, 2026)

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This post is part of the Informed Intercession series, equipping Christians to pray for Israel's gospel hope.

