

[Transcript] Plain English with Derek Thompson / Israel Has No Good Options

What would you do if you got scammed?

Would you suffer in silence or would you do something about it?

Well, I got scammed once and this is the story of what I did.

I'm Justin Sales, the host of The Wedding Scammer, a true crime podcast from The Ringer, and for seven episodes, we're hunting a calm man, a guy with a lot of aliases, a guy who's ruined a lot of weddings, and with the help of some friends, I just might be able to catch him. Listen to The Wedding Scammer on Spotify or wherever you get your podcasts.

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leave ready. SAP has been there, done that, and can help you be ready for anything that comes next because it will. So be ready with SAP. Today's episode is about Israel's terrible choices.

This is the third episode that we've done on the Israel Hamas War. The first episode that we did looked at the acute reasons why Hamas attacked now. The second episode that we did just last week looked at the long and tortured history of Israel and Palestine. This is about the war happening as we speak. In the last two weeks, the two reasonable ideas that I've heard from the most sources from my favorite writers and podcasters from the White House and politicians are these. Number one, Israel has a right to defend itself. And number two, Israel must wage a moral war, must do everything in its power to limit civilian casualties and to preserve the cause of long-term peace. And this is where I have to make my confession. My confession is that I agree with each of these ideas in isolation. But I'm starting to worry that together, they make absolutely no sense. What do I mean? Israel has a right to defend itself. Yes, of course. Who could possibly disagree with this? Palestinian militants, terrorists, acting at the behest of the state just killed more than a thousand people. Hamas leaders went on television to boast about the accomplishment. The idea that any country facing such a dilemma ought to sit back

and do nothing is completely unreasonable. But let's look reality clearly in the face here.

What does Israel's defense mean in practice? Hamas is not headquartered in some clearly labeled and discreet building standing far outside of downtown Gaza. It is a political, social, and economic institution that is sewn into the fabric of the city. And that means to uproot Hamas, Israel destroys Gaza, kills civilians, demolishes homes. In the fog of war, many news organizations made this egregious error of prematurely blaming Israel for blowing up a hospital, which it evidently did not, and it's possible the hospital itself did not even fall. But the plausibility, the plausibility that Israel might have hit a hospital with an errant missile is of a piece with the fact that in an attempt to destroy the ruling government of Gaza, it is manifestly laying waste to the entire region. Can we really look at these pictures and tell ourselves that reducing Gaza to rubble will make Palestinian refugees less desperate,

[Transcript] Plain English with Derek Thompson / Israel Has No Good Options

less interested in seeking militant solutions to the problem of the territory? More amenable to peace? I don't think so. This would not be the first time that Israel, in mounting a muscular defense of its territory, attempted to tear down one enemy and accidentally built up an even greater one. In his book, *A High Price*, the author Daniel Byman observed that throughout its history,

Israel's aggressive response to terrorism has often succeeded narrowly in defeating the terrorists of the day, but has also exacerbated the root problem that created the terrorism in the first place by further alienating the very Palestinians that gave rise to those movements. Israel has essentially, again and again, fought fire using water mixed with gasoline. Today's guest is Daniel Byman. He is one of the world's leading researchers on terrorism and counterterrorism and Israel's military. He is a professor at Georgetown University, and today we talk about the history of Israel's war against terror and warfare, the ongoing conflict in Gaza, why Israel is doing what it's doing, and why this current plan has me so concerned. I'm Derek Thompson. This is Plain English.

Daniel Byman, welcome to the show. Thanks for having me.

So before we talk about what Israel should do right now and what it may do in the next few days and weeks, I want to get your reaction to this moment. In February this year, you wrote an essay for *Foreign Affairs Journal*, and the title and the subtitle of that essay was *The Third Intifada, Why the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Might Boil Over Again*. This was just in February this year. In the article itself, you mentioned that Israel and Hamas are in a tentative truce. Those are your words, and I think that's a term that a lot of people might have used to describe relations between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip. How did you see something like this coming? And are you surprised by the fact that indeed it was Hamas that succeeded in carrying out this terrorist attack after this period of, as you called it, tentative truce?

So I would say I got it half right and half wrong. So let me start with where I feel my work was accurate, which was there were a lot of signs that Israeli-Palestinian relations were getting significantly worse and only headed in the wrong direction. You had the election of a much more right-wing Israeli government. Even before then, you had growing violence on the West Bank. 2021 was a bad year. 2022 was worse. And 2023, even before the October 7th attack, looked even more dangerous. You also had increased harassment of Palestinians by settlers. And in general, a sense among Palestinians that this government was never going to be serious about advancing Palestinian claims to nationhood or independence, so a sense of despair and growing violence. Where I got wrong was I thought Hamas might do some limited attacks. I thought we might see a return to some of the, I'll say, small-scale rocket attacks we've seen in the past. I did not anticipate the large-scale operation Hamas launched, both in terms of rockets and missiles, but especially smashing through the security barrier and killing 1,400 Israelis, kidnapping and bringing back to Gaza well over 200. So I was focused more on the West Bank. And while I did see

that there was tension and problems with Hamas, I didn't anticipate the scale or scope of Hamas's operations. I want to talk to you about Israel's strategy and the degree to which its strategy is feasible. I think it's probably best to begin by defining what we understand that strategy to be. To the best of your understanding, what do you think Israel is trying to accomplish with both its air attack today and over the last few weeks and its forthcoming ground invasion of Gaza? So Israeli leaders have said they want to destroy Hamas and they use different words and

phrases, but you heard the word destroy a lot. I think, however, that they know that that's beyond their reach, at least in a fundamental sense. So Hamas is deeply rooted in Gaza. In addition to effectively having been the government of Gaza since seizing power there in 2007, it also has extensive networks through educational institutions, through mosques, through charities. And so even if Israel were to kill 50%, 75% of Hamas leaders, Hamas has a very deep presence and being very hard to eliminate the group. So I think a more realistic goal for Israel would be to hit the Hamas leadership hard and to shake its hold on power in Gaza. And military operations are designed in part to kill Hamas leaders, but they're also designed in part to try to make Hamas come and fight and make Hamas vulnerable and to discredit Hamas. One of the Israeli goals in past military operations was to say to Palestinians in general, look if you use violence, and we're talking far more limited violence than what we saw on October 7th, the Palestinians will pay a heavy price and therefore don't. To restore that form of deterrence is an Israeli goal and that's going to be exceptionally difficult given the scale of the Hamas attack. In the past, Israel has usually afflicted somewhere between 10 times to 100 times as many casualties on Palestinians as it suffered itself. And if you say there are 1,400 Israeli dead, you do the math, those are very big numbers. Right. You just said they have, among other goals, these two that I find very much to be potentially in conflict. Number one, hit the leadership hard, kill a lot of Hamas officials or generals, fighters, but also discredit Hamas. The first strategy that I mentioned or that you mentioned is a matter of military execution. The second is about hearts and minds. And in fact, if you end up, this is the thing that I want to talk to you about the most, if you end up killing a large number of Hamas fighters, you're very likely to kill hundreds, maybe even thousands, of Palestinian civilians at the same time, thereby crushing your ability to win the hearts and minds of the international community. Before we get into exactly how Israel could theoretically untangle the Scordian Knot, my question for you as a historian of counterterrorism and specifically a historian of Israeli counterterrorism is to ask, has Israel ever succeeded in any kind of military campaign like this before to invade a place like Gaza, depose of enough of its government that it makes its own population feel safer, but without triggering some kind of broader war? Is there any kind of historical analogy we can draw from here? So yes and no. I mean, what Israel would say is when it's done these sorts of operations, it's usually done them in the conflict of ongoing struggles. So let me give you a couple examples. So one is when Israel goes into Lebanon in 1982. Now it's going there to drive out the Palestinians and this is a very bloody operation. And in many ways, in a narrow sense, it's a success. The Palestinian militant presence is not completely removed from Lebanon, but greatly diminished, and the Palestinian leadership goes to Tunis. And it really removes a kind of cross-order option for the Palestinians that has profound consequences for their eventual decision to seek peace talks. However, that same operation leads to the creation of a new group, the Lebanese Isbullah, created by Lebanese Shia who are over time infuriated by the Israeli occupation. And this group is far more deadly than the various Palestinian groups were. So on one hand, success, on the other hand, failure. What I would say Israelis consider a more real success, though, is operations in the West Bank during the Second Intifada. Now the Second Intifada breaks out in 2000. You have, during the course of it, over a thousand Israelis die. In 2002, there's basically a suicide bombing a week.

[Transcript] Plain English with Derek Thompson / Israel Has No Good Options

So incredibly bloody, but also prolonged. Israel goes into the West Bank where it had reduced its presence, giving autonomy to the Palestinians during the kind of heyday of peace talks in the 1990s, goes and reoccupies the West Bank, imposes checkpoints, builds a security barrier, arrests and kills Palestinian militant groups, and certainly doesn't solve the problem, but greatly reduces it from Israel's point of view. And Israelis often use the term mowing the grass, which is kind of a grim term. But their idea is, look, there are going to be problems. You go after them, you knock them down, and a month later, a week later, you're going to have to do it again. But you can keep it contained. And they would say there's a big difference between suffering 10 dead in terrorist attacks and suffering 100 dead. And if they can reduce the level, Israelis can live their lives. The Israeli economy can continue unabated and so on. And that stands in sharp contrast to the second intifada and, of course, what we just saw two weeks ago, where we had a massive attack there. Israelis can't live an ordinary life with that sort of threat on their border. Is it a meaningful distinction to point out that a lot of Israel's past successes have been to root out terrorist cells or militant cells of Palestinians, whereas in Gaza, Hamas is the government. It is the state. It's not just a terrorist cell that happens to reside in a state that has a government that has some tentative agreement with the terrorist cell to not attack it. Like, sometimes I wonder, like, you know, even the words we use, there's a lot of pressure upon liberal journalists to say, call it a terrorist attack, call it a terrorist attack. And I think, you know, most of the time when I think of a terrorist attack, I think of an organization like Al Qaeda, which is a non-state actor, this is a state invading a neighboring state to murder its civilians. That's much more like I'm used to calling war than terrorism. And so I'm not an expert here. Am I sort of playing funny with these words or is it a meaningful point that Hamas is the government of Gaza? I think it's incredibly meaningful that Hamas is the government of Gaza. And I think it's consequential for several reasons. First, as you say, I would say Hamas uses terrorism, and thus the terrorist label is appropriate. But it also, you know, runs the DMV. It's in charge of the water system. It has police and it has a military. So if we say it's a terrorist group that misses a lot of what Hamas does, and it misses part of why it has some degree of popularity among ordinary Gazans, and it misses things such as when money goes into Gaza, a lot of it goes to legitimate purposes, as well as some of it to funding violence. And it's really difficult to separate out the state functions of Hamas from the violent ones, because money is tangible and people can be moved around. But, yes, it's a much bigger thing. And I've always argued that Hamas, as well as Bala in Lebanon, are much more successful groups because they're embedded in state and society in a way that al-Qaeda or the ISIS simply were not, where those are just some crazies running around with guns that kill people, but don't fundamentally shape the lives of people as governments the way Hamas does. A second thing, and I think this is extremely important for the long term, is that your point about Hamas being more like a state raises the obvious question, which is, let's give Israel tremendous military success as a premise right now. They go in, Hamas is driven out. And then what happens? So I think one thing the United States learned rather painfully and rock and painfully in Afghanistan was removing the government as hard, but that's

easier than establishing the new good government in its place. And this proved very difficult in U.S. operations. And who's going to take over from Hamas? And one area where I am quite critical of Israel is that its operations on the West Bank and its general move away from peace talks have discredited Palestinians who are seeking peace. So if you're a Palestinian who's champion peace talks, all you can say is that in the 30 years this has been going on, Israeli settlements have increased, there's been violence. Peace talks have not achieved much. While Hamas can brag that violence has achieved a lot. But as a result, the moderates are discredited. People don't look to them for solutions. And so when, and I hope, when the dust settles and when the shooting stops, it's unclear who's going to manage the state functions of Gaza because I don't think there is anyone right now. Let's talk about what a ground invasion of Gaza might actually look like. Give me a sense of the urban environment that the IDF will be walking into. So ground invasions of dense urban areas like Gaza are absolute nightmares. And they're nightmares for the population there and they're nightmares for the militaries going in. So just to kind of talk military operations for 20 seconds. Good militaries like the Israeli military, like the U.S. military, a lot of their advantages are in intelligence and mobility and long-range strike and the ability to use large complex operations, which most militaries can't do well. All those are very hard in urban operations. Urban operations, it's hard to have intelligence as to who is where. If you do long-range strike, you might hit the wrong people or even your own people. And it allows small groups of gunmen to take advantage of buildings or rubble and hide and pop out and do attacks. And Gaza is incredibly dense in terms of the buildings. It even still has many people living in the areas where fighting is going to occur, even though many have fled. Making this more complex, Hamas actually has built a vast tunnel infrastructure. The BBC did the story saying it's roughly the size of the London Underground. And so this structure enables them to hide their leaders, maybe hostages are down there. But it also enables them to pop up behind the advancing Israeli troops and to do attacks. So it's a very difficult operating environment. And Israel, to keep its people safe, will probably be very careful about advancing and may often prefer to simply, people are shooting from a certain area, may prefer to level the building rather than go apartment by apartment to make sure there are no non-combatants. And one of Hamas's tactics has historically been to co-locate civilian and military assets. And as a result, Israel might be shooting at a military target, but there might be a civilian target right next to it. And that's going to result in problem after problem. You mentioned co-location of military and civilian assets in Gaza. This is a point that's been brought up a lot by Western media. The fact that Hamas uses, quote, human shields, the fact that Hamas, quote, has its headquarters in a Gaza hospital. Number one, I see these reportings. I haven't individually reported to know if they're true or not. Tell me, again, as an Israeli kind of terrorist expert, how far would you go to characterize the degree to which Hamas hides rockets behind civilians and military headquarters in establishments of critical importance for this civilian population like hospitals? So it's hard for me to know as a percentage of total assets or some sort of figure I'd like to give you. I would say that the New York Times and others have reported a lot of examples of this. And this is something we've seen after conflict, after conflict, where we've seen this sort of co-location. To make it more complex, Gaza itself is simply very dense. So it's just very hard to have stuff in one place that is military and not have it be near civilian stuff because of the nature of Gaza.

[Transcript] Plain English with Derek Thompson / Israel Has No Good Options

So some of it, I think, is deliberate, and some of it is due to the density of Gaza, it's almost impossible to avoid. Given the operating environment that you've described, what kind of casualties on each side are we looking at? I mean, both on the Israeli military side, but also I'm interested in your characterization of the civilian numbers that we're likely to see if the ground invasion goes forth. So a lot depends on how far Israel goes into Gaza and how long it stays there. But right now, I'm seeing figures I've seen are over 5,000 Palestinian casualties. And I think that number could easily triple, perhaps get significantly greater depending on how far Israel goes into Gaza. And a lot of this is also going to be how Israel goes into Gaza. If it goes cautiously, and if it's using its forces to flatten buildings where there's resistance, and this is a slow grinding operation with a lot of artillery, that will kill a lot of people. My sincere hope is that civilians are able to leave, but certainly many have, but many haven't. And this is kind of a constant in this sort of warfare with some people for whatever reasons are unable to leave or choose not to leave. And Hamas, as incentives, unfortunately, for them to stay. So there are both political reasons for Hamas to do this, and simply the vagaries of the human condition where not everyone can or does decide to leave even or so. Israel's decision to announce that it's about to attack and encourage civilians to leave, this is another thing that's gotten a lot of play in Western media. Is this a common practice for Israel to announce these kind of intentions? And has it actually worked to save civilian lives? Does it have any kind of ameliorative effect in terms of saving lives or preserving Israel's international reputation? So certainly in terms of preserving Israel's international reputation, this sort of thing, people look at the destruction and they say innocent people died. And even if Israel says one tenth of as many people died as might have otherwise died, people simply look at the destruction deaths of civilians and most criticize Israel for that. Does it save lives? Yes. So let me give a few examples. In the past, Israel used to, when it was going to bomb a building, would often, what they would call kind of knock on the roof, where they would do a charge that would make a noise, but that would not be very destructive. So people would have time to leave and then they would destroy the building. And that people will be able to leave the building. That saves their lives. When people flee a conflict zone, often they're going to situations where they don't have enough food or water, they don't have fuel, they don't have shelter. I don't want to minimize the plight of the refugees and displaced in Gaza, which is to me considerable and demands their national attention. But at the same time, they're not in a war zone. They're not in a place where things are blowing up all the time, where soldiers on Israel are shooting and Hamas militants are firing back. When the United States went into places like Belouja, it gave warnings for civilians to leave. It said, this is going to be a combat zone. And I think the US would say that was a success, even though civilians still died in these conflicts.

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In your book, *A High Price, The Triumphs and Failures of Israeli Counterterrorism*, you latch onto this theme that I find so, so important for the debates about Israel's response to the October 7th attacks. You point out that Israel has had many significant successes in its counterterrorism efforts. If you look at those successes in a very narrow lens, did they get the terrorists? Did they successfully target and kill key terrorist leaders?

But if you broaden the scope and look at the long run, you find over and over that Israel accidentally or tangentially alienates potential allies. It sows even more discord among Palestinians that it fertilizes the field of terrorism even as it is killing individual terrorists.

I wanted to talk to you about this because I am so concerned that that is what might happen here, that in the narrow effort to respond to the brutalization of Israeli civilians from October 7th, Israel is going to do grave moral damage to its reputation plus kill thousands and thousands of Palestinians. To put the question to you bluntly, does Israel's stated strategy make sense? Do you think that the strategy that you've heard from Netanyahu and other IDF officials makes sense in terms of Israel's long-term goals to both defeat Hamas and live with greater security?

So, trying to target Hamas makes sense given what we now know about the organization.

So, what I would have told you wrongly a month ago was that Hamas has accepted, to some degree, the reality of Israel. It's hostile that Israel doesn't like Israel, but Hamas is going for limited improvements in its own political condition and for Gaza.

But now that Hamas has shown itself to be willing to kill on a mass scale, I think it's hard for Israel to accept anything but a significant decline in the group. However, in addition to a military strategy, which as we've discussed have many problems, Israel also needs a political strategy. And that political strategy has to be part of how it approaches the broader Palestinian issue. And there has to be a recognition that millions of Palestinians deserve their own political voice. And the specifics of a Palestinian state and leadership and so on, that's got to be something that is negotiated. But there has to be a track for people who want a peaceful outlet. Otherwise, whether it's Hamas or some other violent organization, they have a message to Palestinians that's very compelling, which is, we offer you a promise of results as opposed to those who are calling for negotiations because negotiations never work for Palestinians. And Israel needs to be sending a message that it's going to negotiate, that a peaceful settlement is good. Now, that's not going to happen with Hamas and probably shouldn't given what Hamas has done. But there are other Palestinians who are willing to embrace peace and Israel needs to make them credible. I guess this is where, perhaps it's just my failure of imagination,

I begin to feel hopeless. So, I'm just putting these things down in order of how you said them, that one, Israel has every right to try to root out Hamas. I mean, it's just untenable to live next door to a state actor that's going to just randomly kill a thousand innocent families and then go back across the border and then just do it again six months later. Completely untenable, I get that. Israel has to go into Gaza and engage in brutal, door-to-door ground invasion of this incredibly dense urban area that is inevitably going to create thousands and maybe tens of thousands

of Palestinian civilian casualties. But then, there has to be a political solution whereby Israel negotiates with the same state that it's just invaded and killed thousands of people in. I mean, I trip up here when I think about exactly how this is supposed to work out, even as I should be absolutely clear, I don't have any better solution here. I'm totally at a loss as to what I would advise Israel to do. Is there something about at least my summary of your position or this general position of step one ground invasion, step two political process? Is there something about my summary that you think is falsely or unfairly characterizing the problem here? Unfortunately, no. I think you've accurately described some of the dilemmas. Let me say some of the possibilities might be others helping rule Gaza temporarily.

Former U.S. ambassador to Israel, Martin, had a while ago proposed a trustee ship for Gaza, a U.N. trustee ship. People have talked about several Arab states being involved in this. Of course, there's the possibility that the Palestinian Authority, which works with Israel in the West Bank, might also take power in Gaza. I think we can go one by one and I can explain why I think all those are difficult. I think we need to try to be at least a little more creative because that broader question on a political solution, it's an incredibly difficult long-term problem, but I would say an even more difficult short-term problem, that immediate question of who takes over, because if Israel simply goes in and departs, Hamas just comes back, but the likely alternative candidates all have their weaknesses as well.

Which of the potential political options here do you consider most plausible, and then maybe we can make it harder on ourselves and consider the downsides or difficulties of the most plausible possibility here? I would say the most plausible is the Palestinian Authority coming in under certain circumstances. The caveat being, if they're seen as riding in on the back of Israeli tanks, what little credibility the Palestinian Authority has banishes, that no Palestinians are going to say, oh, after this war that killed thousands of Palestinians, you use that to gain power. That's going to destroy their credibility. I don't know how the circumstances work where they gain credibility or at least don't lose it while taking over, because Hamas will immediately attack them politically if they do. I think the hope would be Hamas itself is asking for the Palestinian Authority to take over, which is not completely inconceivable, even though there have been arrivals, depending on how bad the situation for Hamas gets. It is Hamas so desperate for a ceasefire itself that it's willing to go beyond its current position, but right now that would not be tenable. It's in a way hard for me to imagine, but as your question highlighted, we're choosing among unlikely and bad alternatives, and I'm not sure which unlikely and bad alternative I'd want to put my chips on, but I think we might have to put our chips on one. One interesting wrinkle in the idea that the Palestinian Authority, al-Fatah, comes in and rules in Gaza is, A, this is the organization that was defeated in the 2006 election that then triggered a small civil war in Gaza, and then Hamas took over. B, it's my understanding that Gaza is extremely young. I think I saw one

[Transcript] Plain English with Derek Thompson / Israel Has No Good Options

statistic that 75% of its population could not even vote in the last election that was held in 2006, and there have been other political organizations that have bloomed in the last 16, 17 years since that election, and they tend to be political organizations of young people who are against both al-Fatah and Hamas. And so you create the possibility of a kind of civil war that breaks out, that essentially retraces some of the dynamics of 2006, just with new state actors.

So that's just one concern that comes up when I think of trying to install the current leadership of the West Bank in Gaza, is that it's not entirely clear to me that there would be political will to keep them there?

I think that's correct. I mean, for both Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza, they're dissatisfied with their leadership. And in Gaza, Hamas rules with an iron hand, and the West Bank, the Palestinian Authority rules with an iron hand. We often use the word moderate because it's willing to negotiate with Israel and work with the United States, but politically, it's a dictatorship. And so, understandably, Palestinians, even again, before the latest violence, were both dissatisfied with their leadership. So, yes, I think there's tremendous eagerness for new voices, for new generations, but there isn't a freedom or political space for that to organize.

What can the United States do that would be helpful?

Helpful not only in the short term, in terms of helping to defeat Hamas, but helpful in the longer term to build an era of at least relative peace, relative to what we've just experienced.

So, what the Biden administration has done is tried to reset relations with Israel, for a democratic president. I think President Biden's support for Israel comes from his heart. I think that's where he genuinely stands. But, clean that aside, I think they are making a calculation that if you give Israel a bear hug, that you actually gain more influence, that you will be seen by the domestic audiences friendly, and they're more willing to listen to you. Now, that's a testable proposition, right? I think that's one of their arguments.

If the United States does have influence, I would say it should involve trying to restart a peace process. It should be pressure on Israel to restrain settlers on the West Bank who are out of control. But it's very hard when you have a government in Israel that was elected to not do that, right? I mean, it's not a small ask, what I would suggest the Biden administration asked for. So, I would say to be pressing there, to be ready to seize opportunities. But Israel and the Palestinians,

for them, they have their own politics. And one of the, I think, things that people who don't find the most closely often miss is there's an assumption that the United States is powerful, and these are small countries. But in reality, the United States, as it found in Iraq, as it found in Afghanistan, often has a hard time converting its tremendous economic military power into swaying

government policies, even by governments that should be amenable. And Israel will pursue its own policy in the end. But that's where I'd like to see the Biden administration move forward.

I know that it sounds like from some of my questions, like I have a pretty clear sense of what I think is going to happen in Gaza. I think that probably betrays a lot of uncertainty that I have. My guess is that what happens is that there's a ground invasion, that Israel is moderately successful in terms of its ability to take out a lot of Hamas leaders, but also that that military campaign kills thousands of Palestinians and, ironically, hurts the medium-term cause for peace, even as it removes the most dangerous

[Transcript] Plain English with Derek Thompson / Israel Has No Good Options

and bellicose military leaders in Gaza. What about that outlook do you disagree with? Like, if that's sort of like my baseline going forward, is there anything about that baseline that you, as an expert, think, no, I actually think, I think you're a little bit wrong about this or about that. I think that's correct. And I would add, this latest attack on Israel, both because of the number of people who died, but also how they died, the reports of atrocities and so on, it may discredit Prime Minister Netanyahu, which many progressive Americans may like, because they see a mess up, not a good Prime Minister for Israel. But it's going to empower more conservative voices in Israel, right, that people who say you can't trust the Palestinians, they're just a bunch of animals and killers. That faction is going to get stronger. So I think, domestically, the politics of peace are worse on the Israeli side, and they're worse on both the Palestinian side and the broader Arab sets. I think your general point is absolutely correct. My hope, and this is probably naive, but I'm grasping right now, is that sometimes these cataclysms change things so much that new opportunities emerge. And in 1973, and as I think many people know, this attack occurs on the anniversary of 1973 war, it's immediate aftermath. The Israelis thought Egypt was evil, right? This was a surprise attack that killed lots of Israelis. And only a few years later, you have real peace. And it's far from perfect, but it's a tremendous achievement. So by essentially taking the game board and flipping it up in the air, which is what I think Hamas has done, I'm not sure exactly where the pieces are going to land. And my hope is that smart, imaginative people are looking at this region and trying to find opportunities to move things forward. But I agree, my predictions, and I think the short term at least, are looking worse, not better. Daniel Byman, thank you very much. My pleasure. Thanks for having me. Plain English was hosted and reported by me, Derek Thompson, and produced by Devon Manzi. We'll see you back here every Tuesday for a brand new episode. Have a great day.
you