By any political measure, President Donald Trump’s arrival in Israel this week marks a moment of extraordinary theater. He lands to what is expected to be a hero’s welcome, credited with brokering a deal that freed Israeli hostages held in Gaza for more than two years. For Israelis still haunted by images of captivity and war, Trump’s handshakes and photo ops will symbolize something few dared to imagine a year ago: an end, at least for now, to one of the bloodiest chapters in recent Middle East history.

But beneath the spectacle lies a question as old as the region itself — can this peace last?

A Deal Laden With Risk

The deal’s terms are ambitious and combustible. All hostages in Gaza are to be released, Israeli troops are to withdraw, and in return, 2,000 Palestinians imprisoned in Israel — including 250 serving life sentences — are being freed. To the Trump administration, this is a masterstroke of diplomacy. To skeptics, it’s a fragile bargain built on temporary alignment rather than genuine reconciliation.

The coming hours will test both narratives. If even one Israeli hostage fails to make it home alive, the euphoria in Tel Aviv could curdle into fury. The Israeli right, already wary of Trump’s transactional style, may accuse him of naivety or worse — of legitimizing Hamas by treating it as a negotiating partner rather than a terrorist adversary.

Trump’s success, in other words, depends on an almost impossible balance: delivering peace without appearing to reward violence.

The Unfinished 20-Point Plan

The hostage deal is only the first act of Trump’s broader 20-point Middle East peace plan, a

sweeping vision that promises reconstruction, demilitarization, and eventual Palestinian self-governance. Yet even his allies concede the next steps are riddled with peril. Who will govern Gaza once Israeli troops withdraw? How will Hamas — permitted, under Trump’s terms, to remain armed for a “period of time” — be integrated into any future security arrangement?

Trump’s answer, characteristically, is to project confidence. “The war is over,” he declared aboard Air Force One. But wars in this region rarely end with a signature — they fade, fracture, and, too often, flare again.

Rebuilding Gaza: Hope Meets Skepticism

If the ceasefire holds, Gaza could soon see something it hasn’t in years: cranes, cement mixers, and aid convoys instead of drones and airstrikes. On Sunday, humanitarian trucks crossed the border for the first time in months, signaling cautious optimism. European partners like Germany are pressing Israel to open Gaza further, arguing that reconstruction is essential to preventing relapse into war.

Yet rebuilding Gaza without addressing its governance may only paper over deeper fault lines. Billions in aid will mean little if Hamas and Israel remain locked in ideological hostility — or if ordinary Gazans see reconstruction as foreign-managed rather than homegrown.

America’s Limited but Symbolic Role

Trump’s decision to send 200 U.S. troops to monitor the ceasefire underscores both his ambition and restraint. He wants to claim the mantle of peacemaker without the burden of nation-building. “No boots on the ground in Gaza,” Vice President JD Vance clarified, a reminder that America’s tolerance for another Middle Eastern quagmire has long since evaporated.

Their presence, however, is more than symbolic. These troops will serve as Trump’s eyes and ears — and his political insurance. Should the ceasefire falter, he can claim the U.S. did everything possible to enforce peace. If it endures, he can claim it as proof of American credibility restored.

The Politics of Legacy

For Trump, this trip is as much about history as diplomacy. He will speak to the Knesset as a president seeking not just peace, but vindication — proof that his brand of dealmaking can achieve what generations of traditional diplomacy could not.

If the ceasefire holds and hostages return safely, Trump will have secured a signature foreign policy victory in an election year. But if the deal unravels — if even one faction breaks faith — the backlash will be swift, and the “hero’s welcome” could morph into political liability.

In the end, Trump’s Israel trip encapsulates his presidency’s paradox: a relentless appetite for bold moves, paired with a tendency to mistake the dramatic for the durable. The hostages may come home. The guns may fall silent. But true peace — as ever in the Middle East — will take far more than one man’s deal.