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Trump Envoy Reports Hostage Deal with Hamas Near, But Negotiations Remain Challenging

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Trump-appointed special envoy Adam Boehler has stated that a deal to secure the release of Israeli hostages held by Hamas is “closer than it’s ever been,” although he warned that the group remains “very hardheaded.” His remarks highlight a possible breakthrough amid broader diplomatic

efforts to de-escalate violence in Gaza through a 60-day ceasefire and prisoner exchange.

Speaking at the Aspen Security Forum, Boehler noted that Israel's recent military actions against Iranian targets have shifted the political dynamics, offering a narrow opportunity for progress. While cautiously optimistic, he underscored that negotiating with Hamas remains complex due to its rigid posture and reluctance to compromise.

Ongoing talks in Doha, mediated by Qatar, Egypt, and the United States, have centered on a phased agreement. The current proposal includes a 60-day ceasefire, the release of 10 living hostages and the remains of 18 deceased individuals, a corresponding release of Palestinian prisoners, and increased humanitarian aid to Gaza.

Although Israeli officials have signaled openness by agreeing to withdraw some troops from specific areas of Gaza, Hamas has so far resisted key concessions. Boehler's comments echoed earlier statements from U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff, who also noted that progress had been made but emphasized that core disagreements remained.

An Israeli government official estimated that a final agreement could be reached within one to two weeks, though not immediately. The potential deal outlines a structured exchange involving both hostages and detainees, along with an operational pause to facilitate aid deliveries and reduce civilian harm.

Despite cautious optimism, the challenges remain substantial. Boehler's description of Hamas as "very hardheaded" reflects Israel's frustration over perceived stalling tactics and shifting demands. At the same time,

both sides appear to be inching closer to consensus on core elements of the deal.

If implemented, the agreement would allow for a significant increase in humanitarian aid to Gaza while offering some relief to families of the hostages. It would also mark the most substantial diplomatic achievement in the conflict since the latest round of hostilities began.

As negotiations continue in Doha, the coming weeks may prove decisive. A carefully phased ceasefire and hostage exchange could provide a rare window for stability, if both parties are willing to move past entrenched positions and prioritize humanitarian and strategic outcomes.