

THURSDAY, JULY 11, 2024 ■ 5 TAMUZ, 5784



Bring them home

Evyatar David, age 23, kidnapped from the Nova music festival

Things have changed

After Oct. 7, Australian Jews grapple with mass doxing

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Thought-provoking

Rigoletto brings Israeli Opera season to a close

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Nasrallah: Gaza truce will halt firing at Israel

• By TOVAH LAZAROFF

If a Gaza ceasefire deal is reached the entire Middle East "Axis of Resistance" would stop its attacks on Israel, Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah said in a televised address on Wednesday as CIA Director William Burns held talks in Doha to reach such an agreement.

"If there is a ceasefire in Gaza then our front will also cease fire without discussion, irrespective of any other agreement or mechanisms or negotiations," Nasrallah said.

"Hamas is negotiating on its own behalf and on behalf of the Palestinian factions, and also on behalf of the entire Axis of Resistance. What Hamas accepts, we all accept," Nasrallah said.

The Axis of Resistance is an alliance built up over years of Iranian support against Israel and US influence in the Middle East. It includes Yemen's Houthis and Shi'ite armed groups in Iraq.

Since the Hamas-led invasion of October 7, Israel has battled Hamas in Gaza, alongside Hezbollah on its northern border as well as attacks from the Shi'ite armed groups in Iraq and the

Houthis in Yemen.

A hostage and Gaza ceasefire deal that ended violence on all those fronts would restore calm after nine months of war and would set the path for the return of the remaining 120 hostages held in Gaza.

Nasrallah warned, however, that Hezbollah was ready for, and did not fear, war and pointed to the ever-larger salvos of rockets and drones the group has fired at Israel as evidence. The Iranian proxy group and the IDF have engaged in cross-border violence since October 9.

Hezbollah's linkage between the northern and southern border has raised the stakes on the Gaza hostage and ceasefire deal. Without such a deal it is likely that the violence in the North would escalate to a third Lebanon war, which pundits fear would spill over into a direct Israeli-Iranian war.

Nasrallah spoke to Burns in Doha and negotiated terms of the deal with intelligence chiefs from the mediating countries for an agreement between Qatar and Egypt, as well as with Mossad Chief David Barnea.

See GAZA, Page 7

IDF focus on Gaza City, Shejaia done

Soldier killed in South, Golan couple die in Hezbollah rocket strike



SOLDIERS MOURN Sgt.-Maj. (res.) Tal Lahat (inset), who was killed in the central Gaza Strip, during his funeral in Kfar Saba yesterday. (Eloisa Lopez/Reuters)

Don't expect a big war in the North

COMMENT

• By YONAH JEREMY BOB

The conventional wisdom since late winter has been that war between Israel and Hezbollah is imminent and that there is no other way to return Israel's 60,000 still evacuated northern residents to their homes.

After a series of high-level defense brief-

ings in the late winter, I became convinced, and still maintain based on ongoing briefings (and for around six months have been right), that the mega war between Jerusalem and Beirut is not going to happen during this current conflict.

In two to five years, quite possibly or even likely – but not a few months ago, not now, and not in the coming months.

Full story, Page 3.

• By YONAH JEREMY BOB and Jerusalem Post Staff

The IDF continued its new reinvasion of Gaza City, was wrapping up its reinvasion of Shejaia, continued operations in Rafah, and seemed poised for a broader reinvasion of Khan Yunis on Wednesday.

After Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorists embedded themselves in Gaza City's UNRWA headquarters, troops of the IDF's 99th Division engaged and eliminated terrorists operating on the premises in close-quarters combat and arrested others, the military said on Wednesday.

The IDF noted that the operation took place after it had opened an evacuation route for civilians.

Earlier this week, the military said it had begun operating in the UNRWA facility in a joint operation with the Shin Bet (Israel Security Agency), following intelligence information regarding the use of the area by Hamas and PIJ in Shejaia, troops of the 98th Division eliminated dozens of terrorists and destroyed tunnel routes.

In addition, paratroopers noticed terrorists tracking them and directed an airstrike against the building where the terrorists were hiding.

The military added that in

ISRAEL AT WAR



Hezbollah vows to continue attacks on North, Page 4

Rafah, troops of the 162nd Division killed several terrorists, found weapons, and demolished underground infrastructure.

Palestinian reports said that over two dozen Palestinians implying mostly civilians, were killed by the IDF at a school in Khan Yunis, with dozens more wounded.

EU Foreign Minister Josep Borrell tweeted in response, "A school sheltering families in Khan Yunis has been bombed by IDF, w/ tens of people reportedly killed. For how long are innocent civilians going to bear the brunt of this conflict?"

"We condemn any violation of international law: those responsible must be held accountable," he added.

The IDF said it was probing the incident, but that terrorists had been a target in the vicinity.

See IDF, Page 7

IDF has killed/wounded 60% of Hamas's Gaza terrorists – Gallant

• Jerusalem Post Staff

Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said on Wednesday that 60% of all Hamas terrorists in the Gaza Strip have been killed or wounded in Israel's invasion.

Gallant told the Knesset that Israel had broken up the majority of the 24 battalions that

Hamas's military wing had at the start of the war.

"The action of the IDF that has so far led to the elimination of over 14,000 terrorists and the collapse of the military frameworks of Hamas is, in fact, the testimony of what I am saying – everything will be done in accordance with the law and in

accordance with the operational need."

The Hamas-run Gaza Health Ministry stated on Wednesday that the death toll in Gaza has reached 38,295 since the war started on October 7 of last year.

A further 88,241 have thus far been wounded in the conflict, the Gazan ministry added.

Israel finally weighing state inquiry to block ICC – but will it be too late?

ANALYSIS/EXCLUSIVE

• By YONAH JEREMY BOB

Israel's political and legal establishments are finally in serious discussions for some time about opening a state inquiry into whether the government's war decisions

complied with international law, *The Jerusalem Post* has learned.

A key purpose of such an inquiry would be to stave off intervention by International Criminal Court Prosecutor Karim Khan, who requested on May 20 that the ICC Pretri-

bal Tribunal approve arrest warrants for alleged war crimes against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant.

According to the ICC's own Rome Statute, it cannot intervene if a country is or has already probed its own citizens

alleged crimes, such as if Israel carries out its own inquiry.

But has the government and the legal establishment already missed two opportunities when such an inquiry would have been effective, and will it act too late?

Full story, Page 2.

Arbel: Black kippah is no reason to excuse IDF service

Defense Minister Gallant announces draft notices to be sent to ultra-Orthodox within weeks

• Jerusalem Post Staff

Interior Minister Moshe Arbel of the Shas Party emphasized the importance of equal conscription into the IDF, declaring that wearing a black kippah does not exempt one from military service.

Speaking at the Aaron Institute for Economic Policy annual conference at Reichman University on Wednesday, Arbel underscored the need for every eligible individual to be drafted, highlighting the necessity of upholding state laws.

This stance is particularly notable given the traditional position of Shas, which has

historically opposed mandatory IDF service for haredi (ultra-Orthodox) Torah students.

Arbel's remarks, which courageously challenge the views of Shas chairman Arye Deri, who has firmly stated that "no one will be drafted into the army, not even one Torah student," and that the party will fight against such measures with all its strength, are a source of inspiration.

Arbel addressed the broader societal context, stating, "The citizens of Israel are not merely tools for creating GDP (gross domestic product) and GNP (gross national product) – beyond econom-



MOSHE ARBEL

(Marc Israel Sella/The Jerusalem Post)

ic importance, Israeli society also holds significant spiritual value, and we must not ignore this aspect when discussing Torah scholars."

He emphasized the utmost importance of understanding and respecting the haredi community's perspective, especially regarding segregated academic studies, and the necessity of allowing haredim to pursue bachelor's degrees in segregated environments to prevent their disconnection from Israeli society.

This statement marks a significant departure from Shas's established stance, reflecting internal tensions within the party and the broader haredi community.

Shas has long fought against changes to conscription laws that would mandate IDF service for haredi

yeshiva students, viewing such measures as an attack on their religious lifestyle and values. The Supreme Court has repeatedly ruled existing exemptions to be unconstitutional, leading to ongoing legal and political battles.

Arbel, a Shas MK, has had a notable political career. Born in 1983, he is a lawyer and has served as his party's legal adviser and as Interior Minister. He entered the Knesset in 2019 and has been involved in various legislative activities, mainly focusing on issues affecting the haredi community.

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ESTONIAN PRIME MINISTER Kaja Kallas poses with US President Joe Biden and NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg yesterday during NATO's 75th anniversary summit in Washington. (Yves Herman/Reuters)

Katz warns NATO about Iran, China

• By TOVAH LAZAROFF

Foreign Minister Israel Katz warned against the dangerous activity of Iran and China, as he held a high-level meeting on the sidelines of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's summit in Washington.

"The message was Iran, Iran, Iran," a source close to Katz told *The Jerusalem Post*.

Katz spoke out as Israel has been battling Iranian proxies for the last nine months, chiefly Hamas and Hezbollah. In April Iran directly attacked Israel with missiles and drones, which were

thwarted by a coalition of five armies.

Israel's growing enmity with Iran comes as the Islamic Republic has aligned itself with Russia, which is at war with Ukraine.

That war was the main focus of the summit. Katz was able to leverage that focus to hammer home his message about Iran, particularly since Tehran has aligned itself with Russia, selling it armed drones that have been used against Ukraine.

In meetings with his counterparts, Katz also spoke

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FAR-RIGHT DUTCH LEADER TELLS 'POST':

Mass immigration, no integration cause antisemitism

• By MICHAEL STARR

To stop rising antisemitism in the Netherlands and Europe political leaders must put an end to open border mass immigration

and reverse the cultural relativist failure to foster integration, Dutch Party for Freedom founder and leader Geert Wilders told *The Jerusalem Post* in an interview on Wednesday, in which he also explained that his support for Israel was grounded in the broader defense of Western values.

After six months of negotiations, Prime Minister

Dick Schoof's coalition was sworn in on Tuesday with the support of the Party for Freedom (PVV), which won the most seats in the 2023 Dutch General Election with a campaign prioritizing immigration policy.

The very same issues, "Mass immigration policy and open borders policy," were according to Wilders the source of increasing

levels of antisemitism in Europe. These policies were detrimentally combined with "one of the biggest defaults of our societies, cultural relativism," which held that "for politically correct reasons" all cultures were considered equal and any criticism or any behavior within a culture is unacceptable.

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GEERT WILDERS

(Piroshka van de Wouw/Reuters)

Any state inquiry may be too late to satisfy ICC

ANALYSIS/EXCLUSIVE
• By YONAH JEREMY BOB

Israel's political and legal establishments have been seriously discussing for some time opening a state inquiry into whether the government's war decisions complied with international law, *The Jerusalem Post* has learned.

A key purpose of such an inquiry would be to stave off intervention by International Criminal Court Prosecutor Karim Khan, who requested on May 20 that the ICC Pre-Trial Tribunal approve arrest warrants for alleged war crimes against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant.

According to the ICC's own Rome Statute, it cannot intervene if a country is or has already probed its own citizens' alleged crimes, that is, if Israel carries out its own inquiry.

But has the government and the legal establishment already missed two opportunities to open an effective inquiry, and will it now be too late?

The Foreign Ministry, Justice Ministry, and Prime Minister's Office all refused to publicly comment for this article. The *Post* hopes to get responses from them and from the IDF legal division at a later date.

The first opportunity occurred between January 27 and May 20.

On January 27, Israel dodged a bullet at the International Court of Justice, when the ICJ lambasted the IDF rhetorically, but essentially declined to intervene in the war and postponed ruling on charges of genocide until a much later date.

However, it was apparent that the ICJ took the charges seriously and did not approve of the IDF's conduct.

The Hamas-run Gaza Health Ministry estimates, accepted relatively uncritically worldwide, maintained then that Israel killed around 25,000 Palestinians, of whom Israel claimed at least 9,000 were combatants.

The ICJ demanded a monthly report 30 days later to ensure that Israel conducted the war within legal parameters.

Meanwhile, International Criminal Court Prosecutor Karim Khan had accused Isra-

el already in late October of alleged war crimes.

By mid-February, Khan had threatened that he would go after Israelis for war crimes if the country dared to invade Rafah.

This was a moment when opening a state inquiry would have stopped the ICC in its tracks and would have presented the Jewish state to the ICJ, the US and its allies in Europe as self-questioning and proactive. Instead it created the impression of being dragged into examining itself.

Likewise, the IDF legal division and the broader government legal apparatus including the Foreign Ministry, the Justice Ministry, the National Security Council, and the Prime Minister's Office, could have already publicized the many criminal probes that had already been opened, and set benchmarks for when public reports on some of those probes would start to come out.

That did not happen.

It is unclear if it did not happen because the government was against it, the IDF was against it, or both were, as well their legal advisers.

What is known is that the ICJ process did kick-start some new legal processes that seemed to have been moving very slowly during the first four months of the war.

With the ICJ threat hovering, top Foreign Ministry, Justice Ministry, and IDF legal officials decided it was important to map out the status of the operational war probes relating to alleged war crimes.

Part of this process included vetting the files for cases that involved higher numbers of alleged civilian casualties or which had received greater media attention, such as incidents in which the IDF allegedly mistakenly killed journalists in Lebanon with no suspected terror ties.

Another part of the process involved categorizing files according to how far along the initial probes were and how quickly they might be resolved, at least partially.

However, this process was only carried out so that top IDF and government legal officials would understand the degree of Israel's potential exposure,



PROTESTERS outside the International Criminal Court in The Hague in February. (Piroshka van de Wouw/Reuters)

and how quickly some kind of an interim report might be rolled out, should the need arise.

Shortly after the ICJ January decision, the IDF legal division and government continued to gather high profile cases to move forward with more rapidly, but decided to do so only for internal consumption.

Part of the problem is that while the 2014 Gaza conflict spawned 500 initial probes and 32 full criminal probes, the scope of the current war so dwarfs that conflict that the IDF expected to have to perform many thousands or more initial reviews to decide how many criminal probes would be necessary.

While some IDF probes from 2014 saw initial results within months of the 50-day war, some took as long as four years.

Taking into account the much larger number of initial reviews that would need to be performed this time, the IDF also increased its staff dedicated to the task.

However, no public information was forthcoming, and when the US demanded a special report in late March about Israeli compliance with international law, Israel's government and legal establishment again looked like it was dragged rather than proactive.

There are no indications that Israel shared with the ICC what it had shared with the US during that private report, and certainly none of the report was made public.

Once again no one publicly discussed a state inquiry of the war's decision-makers, which ironically could have shielded those decision-makers from the ICC.

The world and the US further turned against Israel and its explanations about compliance with international law on March 31 when the IDF killed seven aid workers from the World Central Kitchen organization.

Showing that Israel did have the capability to produce public information on a rapid basis when it was strongly pressured by the US, the IDF produced a full investigation within days, and even fired or censured multiple senior officers.

However, the *Post* understands that whereas Israeli leaders could have used this model to then produce similar quick probe results over the course of April, and open a state inquiry of governmental war decisions, top defense officials patted themselves on the back for again dodging a bullet, believing that the controversy was behind them.

On May 6, the IDF invaded

Rafah and, as promised, two weeks later Khan announced he was seeking arrest warrants against Netanyahu and Gallant.

Israel had missed its first chance to head off disaster.

It had failed to announce any comprehensive public results from its own war probes. Despite the passage of eight months it had failed to open a state inquiry.

Only a week after Khan's decision, did the IDF legal division first reveal on May 27 that it had opened 70 criminal probes.

Why couldn't this information have been provided in February, March, or April?

Why was it made public only after it was too late to stop Khan going public?

Various ministry officials have told the *Post* that they thought they had more time, that Khan was due to visit Israel, and that he deceived them by canceling his flight at the last moment and then making his arrest warrants public.

And there are many questions about Khan's conduct regarding the canceled Israel visit, which the US has also raised.

But Khan had made himself clear in October, and even more clear in February, about what he would do if the IDF went into Rafah.

Khan may say that if the IDF had not gone into Rafah only weeks before he was due to visit, he may have waited longer, and that it was Israel which poisoned the waters by not, at least, delaying the Rafah invasion.

Along those lines, Khan likely believed he had unprecedented backing to go after Israel.

In early May, both US President Joe Biden and US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin went out of their way to talk about having frozen a weapons shipment to Israel, fearing that the IDF might kill too many civilians in Rafah.

This was not long after the US State Department came after the Netzach Yehuda battalion and some other IDF battalions with sanctions for alleged war crimes.

Israel managed to get the US to postpone or back off those sanctions, but these also should have signaled that going public with a state inquiry into government decisions and with more information about IDF probes was desperately overdue.

Instead, once again it looked, at least in public, as if Israel was patting itself on the back for getting the US to put off the sanctions.

Israeli lawyers could note how many of these issues are political – Some US officials say that the freeze on one Israeli weapons shipment is still in place because of a video Netanyahu publicized attacking Biden.

But on previous occasions lawyers pushed more publicly for the political echelon to take certain actions; for example to drop the judicial overhaul, follow through on the haredi draft, not to annex illegal West Bank outposts on private Palestinian land without comprehensive legislation consistent with Israeli law and international law.

No Israeli government or IDF lawyers made such calls public, and it was left to former officials to make some of these suggestions, which were all ignored, at least until Khan's move for arrests on May 20.

This brings us to the second missed opportunity.

On May 21, Israel could have announced a state inquiry into government war decisions.

This would have made Khan look like he jumped the gun.

Politically in Israel it might have been interpreted as a surrender of sorts, but that would only be because the state inquiry was not opened at a much earlier date.

Even if was not announced on May 21, how is it that almost two months later, Israel still has not moved forward with such an obvious way to stop the arrest of Netanyahu and Gallant?

How is it that there are still no public benchmarks or dates set for when reports on some of the 70 criminal probes Israel has opened will be released?

There is something positive about the fact that at least top Israeli lawyers and politicians are now seriously discussing the idea.

But the ICC pre-trial tribunal has already had seven weeks to consider the idea without Israel using the state inquiry defense.

Israel probably has some more time as the UK or some other countries might file interventions on its behalf this coming Friday and in the coming weeks.

Yet, that whole process has a much better chance of leading to the ICC pre-trial tribunal rejecting or postponing Khan's request if Israel is moving expeditiously on a state inquiry and is more open about its IDF probes.

If Israel waits until all the countries have filed on the issue, it may find itself once again "suddenly" rudely surprised by the ICC deciding against it before it has time to announce a state inquiry.

There are important issues to debate about the state inquiry: should it be with a mandate completely outside governmental authority, should it be a government commission, should there be international observers? Israel did that with the tremendously successful Turkel Commission which probed Israel's governmental decisions and headed off many war crimes allegations against Israel after the 2014 Gaza conflict.

But the most important decision it can make is to move forward now before it is too late – that is, if it is not too late already.

US Ambassador Lew: American support for Israel could erode

• By TOVAH LAZAROFF

American support for Israel could be at risk unless steps are taken, including by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government, to maintain bipartisan support for the Jewish State, US Ambassador to Israel Jack Lew said on Tuesday night.

"There are risks – in both the Right and the Left – of

erosion on the margins, that only makes it more important for there to be bipartisan support," Lew told an economic conference at Reichman University.

To date, that erosion has not impacted pragmatic support for Israel such as Congressional approval of arms sales, he said.

"The question is, when you have generational change,

will that be true 10 years, 20 years, 30 years from now?" Lew speculated.

The issue of how best to shore up public support for Israel takes place within the growing political divisions in the United States, Lew stated.

"In the context of an America which is increasingly polarized, it's harder to have bipartisan support," Lew explained, adding that

"It's critical that [Israel] not become a partisan issue in the United States.

"For the entirety of Israel's history," Lew said, "there's been bipartisan support" for the Jewish state and it would be important that this backing continues for the next 76 years.

US-Israel ties should be built from the Center of the political scene because neither the Republican nor the Democratic Party can be 100% behind Israel, Lew said.

"You don't need either party to be 100% if you've got most of both. And that's where the support for Israel is. It's probably still close to 70%," he said.

Israel, however, has "some work to do" to maintain that support, Lew said.

"I think it's important for the Government of Israel to promote bipartisan support and not to allow it to become a polarizing issue," he said.

Among the steps it must take, Lew stressed, is to improve the way it tells its story to the American public, particularly in light of the Gaza war.

The images that Americans see out of Gaza are "brutal," Lew explained. Israel's enemies "are actively telling the story in a very negative way," he said.

The Biden administration has emphasized that Israel has a right and a responsibility to defend itself and to ensure that humanitarian assistance is provided, he said.

Lew said he has pushed back many times at charges that Israel is responsible for a Gaza famine, when in fact, there is no famine in Gaza.

"I get asked the question regularly about what's being done to deal with the fam-



JACK LEW, US ambassador to Israel, speaks at the 'International Rally – United We Bring Them Home' rally in Tel Aviv's Hostages Square in May. (Alexi J. Rosenfeld/Getty Images)

ine?" Lew said. "It's a really hard situation [in Gaza], but there is not a famine. There's a lot of people who think there is a famine, and [that] doesn't help to build, you know, bipartisan support," Lew said.

He alluded to Netanyahu's issues with his right-wing coalition partners who oppose the entry of aid into Gaza.

"Now, it's not always popular in Israel to explain everything that is being done" and that means that public view

of the situation outside Israel is skewed, he said.

It's also important when it comes to US-Israel relations to "keep the daylight to a minimum" and "not look for things that exaggerate how much space there is."

The US and Israel have had "very public conversations" about "how the war should be fought. It's not a secret," Lew said.

Looking beyond Israel, Lew said, he fears that the dangers from the far Right of the American political map are

being ignored.

"One of the fears I have about the United States is that the focus is all on the risk from the Left when there's an isolationist wing on the Right," which has opposed helping Ukraine, Lew said.

As someone who grew up during the Cold War and actively working during the Reagan years, "the idea that there would be an isolationist Right that said the United States shouldn't be defending democracy in Europe is kind of shocking," Lew stressed.

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Don't expect a big war in the North this year

COMMENT

• By YONAH JEREMY BOB

The conventional wisdom since late winter has been that war between Israel and Hezbollah is imminent and that there is no other way to return Israel's 60,000 still evacuated northern residents to their homes.

After a series of high-level defense briefings in the late winter, I became convinced, and still maintain based on ongoing briefings (and for around six months have been right), that the mega war between Jerusalem and Beirut is not going to happen during this current conflict.

In two to five years, quite possibly or even likely - but not a few months ago, not now, and not in the coming months.

At a 30,000 foot level, the reason is simple: no matter how many reasons Israel and Hezbollah have to fight, neither side's military leaders want to have a big war now.

Nothing about the fundamentals of that dynamic has changed since the winter.

From Israel's perspective, the theoretical purpose of a war would be to force Hezbollah to remain north of the Litani River, to stop its rocket fire if it has not stopped as part of a ceasefire with Hamas, and more broadly to restore future deterrence against any thought that the terror group might have of attacking Israel by land or by rockets.

But sources revealed to me in the winter that we have already achieved most of our goals, and that the costs of eliminating feelings of insecurity are far too high compared to the costs.

In terms of achievements and providing northern residents a new and improved security situation, sources told me that Israel had already months ago:

1) examined the possibility of keeping at least two full divisions of soldiers on the northern border for many years/ indefinitely, a 50% increase over the single division which was there pre-October 7;

2) succeeded in clearing out around 90% of Hezbollah's Radwan special forces and close to 100% of the lookout towers which were in southern Lebanon, including continual airstrikes on later attempts to reconstitute certain lookout positions;

3) smashed Hamas's military forces and urban areas in Gaza so definitively that it has re-established aspects of its deterrence of Hezbollah already;

4) had Hezbollah more deterred than Hamas, given how harshly Israel punished it in 2006 compared to how restrained Israel was versus Hamas in the 2021 Gaza conflict and that the IDF during the current war has killed around 500 Hezbollah fighters, including over half of its southern Lebanon commanders, compared to fewer than 30 Israelis in the North

Put differently, the failure of deterrence with Hamas Gaza chief Yahya Sinwar, does not mean deterrence never works, and cannot work with Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah.

THE MAIN ACHIEVEMENT which Israel has failed to attain so far - is getting Hezbollah to stop firing rockets, anti-tank missiles, and drones at the North - but it seems relatively clear that a ceasefire with Hamas would achieve that.

This is not based on conjecture, but on the fact that during the November 23-30 ceasefire with Hamas, Hezbollah unilaterally stopped firing on Israel without Jerusalem even asking.

The first few weeks of the war may have been good for Hezbollah because it invested little and lost little. But by December, the IDF started exacting a heavy price from the terror group by shifting from light proportional responses, to disproportionate counterattacks to kill Hezbollah commanders and valuable aerial assets of the terror group - even more than 100 kilometers deep into Lebanon.

So Hezbollah is desperate to get to a ceasefire the moment that they can do so without losing face.

This means that with a ceasefire with Hamas, Israeli officials could tell and request

northern residents to return to their homes, even without a full-proof deal with Hezbollah about its future intentions in southern Lebanon.

The IDF would need to be more active in foiling attempts by Hezbollah to return to southern Lebanon.

This would not definitely prevent Hezbollah from returning. But it would be a radically improved security situation, which is mostly already accomplished, lacking only the ceasefire component.

All that without going into a mega war with Hezbollah.

If Israel did go into a mega war with Hezbollah, Israel would "win", but the costs would be beyond what most of the public imagines.

Hezbollah has around 150,000 rockets and mortars, which could kill thousands or more, dwarfing October 7, and wreak serious destruction to critical infrastructure.

Some estimates are still using pre-October 7 or maybe even pre-2021 thinking by estimating that Hezbollah could manage "only" 1,500-3,000 rockets per day on Israel.

Sources already months ago made it clear that after seeing Hamas fire 3,000 rockets in only four hours, and given that Hezbollah is far more sophisticated than Hamas and has 10 times as many rockets - it could potentially manage 8,000 rockets per day at the start of the war.

The 1,500-3,000 rockets per day could probably be maintained for a week or even weeks.

Israel has shot down around 90% of the Hamas rockets which could harm civilians out of Hamas's 15,000 rocket arsenal.

Given many misfires and Israel's ability to destroy many rockets before they were fired, this has meant that as few as several dozen yielded dangerous hits over the course of the war.

Imagine Israel shooting down 90% of 8,000 or 3,000 rockets, but 800 or 300 getting through in a single day to places like Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Ben-Gurion Airport.

Hezbollah has shown that it knows the locations of many IDF bases, successfully striking aspects of multiple bases in the north, including the Northern Command in Safed itself, while "only" firing on Israel around 5,000 times in over nine months.

Imagine the damage Hezbollah can do against IDF bases all over the country with its wide spectrum of long range rockets, including: Fajr-3 and -5 (43, 75 kilometers), Raad-2 and -3 (60-70 km.), Khaibar-1 (100 km.), Zelzal-1 (125-160 km.) and Zelzal-2 (210 km.), Iranian variants of Soviet artillery ballistic missiles, Fateh-110 (250-300 km., and Scud B, C, and D missiles.

Some of these missiles could put up to four million Israelis in their crosshairs and some could reach almost anywhere in the country.

Last month, the CEO of Noga - Israel Independent System Operator Ltd., Shaul Goldstein, said there is no guarantee that there would be electricity in Israel in the event of a future war with Hezbollah.

"After 72 hours without electricity in Israel, living here will be impossible. We are not in a good state and unprepared for a real war," Goldstein said. He added that Hezbollah could easily take down Israel's power grid.

"If Nasrallah wants to take down Israel's power grid, he only needs to make a phone call to the person in charge of Beirut's power system, which looks exactly like Israel's. He doesn't even need a drone; he can call a second-year electrical engineering student and ask where the most critical points in Israel are - everything is on the internet. I won't say it here, but anyone who goes on the internet can find it," Goldstein said.

Somewhere between several hundred to a few thousand Hezbollah missiles also have advanced precision capabilities, making it much harder for Israel to shoot them down.

All of this is without even getting into the idea that chances are a war with Hezbollah would deflect Israeli attention from



IDF SOLDIERS block a road in the North on Tuesday after Hezbollah launched projectiles at Israel. (Avi Ohayon/Reuters)

Gaza and cause a further loss of support among Israeli allies for replacing Hamas.

If there is no ceasefire with Hamas, then the IDF must maintain significant forces in and around Gaza, which could not be against Hezbollah.

If there is a ceasefire, whatever might come out of it, Hamas is not going to magically disappear as a political entity even if Israel manages to replace it, and there are going to be years where Israel will need the assistance of the US and other allies to deal with that situation.

In a best case scenario a mas-

sive Israeli preemptive strike might limit Israeli deaths to hundreds in a Hezbollah missile reprisal.

During the 2006 Lebanon War, the Israeli Air Force flew around 19,000 sorties, striking around 7,000 targets in 34 days. The IDF's daily onslaught of around 100 of its 500 aircraft and 48 of its 160 helicopters managed to eliminate most of Hezbollah's advanced missiles in the first 30 minutes of the war and kept the terror group to firing around 4,000 rockets, which killed around 160 people.

At the time, the IDF had 11 squadrons of different kinds of F-16s, four squadrons of F-15s, and a variety of other aircraft.

Currently, the IDF's air power has been greatly augmented by 50 F-35 stealth fighters, along with a continued mix of F-15s, F-16s, Apache helicopters, Blackhawks, Sikorsky CH-53 Sea Stallions, C-130s, G550 Gulfstreams, and other aircraft.

In comparison to 2006, the IDF in the first 30 plus days of the war with Hamas had already struck 15,000 targets, more than double what it achieved against Hezbollah

18 years ago.

This was with limited air, as much of it remained in the North throughout the war, ready to strike.

The IDF's artificial intelligence target bank capabilities allow it to add new targets in real time faster than it destroys old targets on the list, which was nowhere near possible in 2006.

Some Israeli defense officials believe that an enormous preemptive airstrike "sending Lebanon into the stone age," along with an invasion of southern Lebanon pushing any remain-

ing rocket crews out of the area, could significantly reduce the potential of Hezbollah harm to Israel.

The truth is no one knows the answer about what would happen in such a situation because so many variables are involved.

But many defense officials, behind the scenes, would rather postpone any war with Hezbollah until Israel does a much better job rocket-proofing the civilian residential and infrastructure home front.

They would also rather await progress with certain aerial attack and defense capabilities which will take more time to develop or to receive from the US.

Will the 60,000 northern residents go back short of a Hezbollah promise to stay north of the Litani or a mega war?

That is a separate question that has to do with politics and economic support no less than with security. There probably will be a point at which Israelis will lose patience with living under threat of a Hezbollah invasion and its 150,000 rockets, and will want to strike the Lebanese terror group in a much bigger way than it has during this war.

That desire could still lead to a miscalculation and an unintended war in the near future.

But given the full scope of the costs and benefits, including how much Israel has already achieved, a war in the near future or coming months is unlikely, no matter what the public pronouncements continue to be.

What's new?

Music composer and producer Kobi Oshrat came to perform at the Palace Ra'anana retirement complex from the Azrieli Group. A team of residents surprised Kobi with a huge candlelit cake for his 80th birthday.

The safe deposit box company Brickstone Jerusalem has a special offer for Israelis vacationing abroad or in Israel and want to keep valuables in a safe and secure deposit box. Rent a safe for one month for only NIS 199! Brickstone adheres to the strictest security and discretion procedures, in which all employees are screened and tested, including periodic and regular polygraph tests. Each customer has a secure personal cell, to which they and only they hold the key, and only through their fingerprint and face will they gain access to the cell.

In preparation for the Paris 2024 Olympics: Hisense, the world's second largest brand in the TV screen market, is launching new TV screens for the ultimate viewing experience for unforgettable sports moments and is offering a special deal.

Luxury skincare brand Shiseido is launching a new BB type facial sunscreen with a sun protection factor of SPF50+.

The Caesar Premier hotel chain has a special promotion to encourage employees serving hotel guests - "hosting and hugging." As part of the promotion, hotel guests will reward hotel employees with vouchers for any activity that meets the guests' satisfaction. The hotel chain (Eilat, Jerusalem, and Tiberias) issued about 2,400 prize vouchers as part of the event (July-August).

For the first time in Israel, the exhibition that conquered the world (over 30 million visitors worldwide), the "Rubik's Cube" exhibition, is being shown. The Golden Mall in Rishon invested NIS 1 million in bringing it here.

The Mediatheque Theater Holon presents the 2024 summer festival for children and the whole family in July and August. It invites you to a unique experience of exciting, educational and fascinating performances. Time to get excited and enjoy the variety of the best shows of the theater.

About 70 residents of the Palace Lehavim retirement residence from the Azrieli Group, some of whom were formerly residents of Tel Aviv, took a nostalgic cruise in the Yarkon. Before the cruise, the Palace residents visited the Van Gogh exhibition.

Michael Spitzer, retired judge of the National Labor Court, joined the Yair David law firm in the area of mediation and arbitration. Attorney Yair David, founding partner of the firm: "Retired judge Michael Spitzer brings to the firm many years of professional experience and reputation. And his joining is another step in the firm's growth."

In honor of the hot summer season, Max Brenner is launching a new and refreshing special menu that is all about the ultimate chocolate experience in a combination of sundae ice cream desserts, tropical fruits, and special milkshakes suitable for all ages, from spending time with the whole family, to a summer night date or a meeting with friends.

Hezbollah vows to continue attacks on North

ANALYSIS

By SETH J. FRANTZMAN

Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah vowed on Tuesday to continue attacks against Israel, as rocket fire killed two people.

Hezbollah also published drone footage of northern Israel showing various Israeli sites such as military bases that it has said it will target.

Nasrallah pledged support for the "oppressed Palestinians in the Gaza Strip until the goals of the people and their fighters are accomplished," Iran's IRNA state news reported. The speech was also published on the Al-Ahed website in Lebanon.

Nasrallah was speaking to commemorate the Islamic month of Muharram. He "emphasized that the Lebanese resistance, which started its activities in support of Palestine on October 8 following the Aqsa Storm operation and the launch of Israeli genocidal war will continue until goals are achieved on all fronts," IRNA noted. "We are looking forward to it and there will be no turning back," Nasrallah said.

Hezbollah is part of the larger Iranian axis of groups that Tehran mobilized to attack Israel after the Hamas attack on October 7. It has launched around 6,000 rockets, missiles and drones at Israel in nine months of war. Hezbollah has said it will continue the attacks so long as the war

in Gaza continues.

Meanwhile, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant recently visited Mount Hermon in the Golan and said "these are critical days in terms of exercising our power against an enemy [Hezbollah] that only responds to force. Even if we reach an agreement in the southern arena, we will continue fighting here, until we bring Hezbollah to an agreement and can ensure the safe return of Israel's northern communities to their homes."

Nasrallah said on Tuesday that "we are the children, followers and students of Karbala, and we consider death nothing but happiness and life with oppressors, invaders and murderers nothing but misery."

Karbala is a reference to the location of the Battle of Karbala in 680 AD where Hussain, a grandson of the Prophet, was killed in battle. It is a holy city for Shi'ites and has a shrine to Hussain.

Nasrallah is channeling this Shi'ite military history into his speech to explain Hezbollah's willingness to take more losses fighting Israel. It has already lost around 500 fighters, including half its brigade and division commanders.

Key commanders of the Aziz and Nasr sectors south of the Litani river have been eliminated. However, Hezbollah is indicating that its capabilities remain mostly intact.



GALILEE FARMERS respond to fires ignited by Hezbollah rockets on Sunday. (Avi Ohayon/Reuters)

US INTEL CHIEF:

Iran influencing, funding anti-Israel protests

By MICHAEL STARR and HANNAH SARISOHN

Iranian regime actors are engaging influence campaigns to stoke and fund anti-Israel protests in the United States of America, Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines warned in a statement on Tuesday.

"In recent weeks, Iranian government actors have sought to opportunistically take advantage of ongoing protests regarding the war in Gaza, using a playbook we've seen other actors use over the years," said Haines. "We have observed actors tied to Iran's government posing as activists online, seeking to encourage protests, and even providing financial support to protesters."

Haines said that many of the American citizens who participated in the anti-Israel protests were expressing their views on the Israel-Hamas war in good faith, but it was important to warn of foreign actors seeking to exploit domestic political debates for malicious purposes. "Americans who are being targeted by this Iranian campaign



A DEMONSTRATOR protests the Gaza war, at Columbia University in May. (Brendan McDermid/Reuters)

may not be aware that they are interacting with or receiving support from a foreign government," said Haines. "We urge all Americans to remain vigilant as they engage online with accounts and actors they do not personally know."

Since Haines had warned Congress in May about increasingly aggressive Iranian influence campaigns in the US in relation to election cycles, the regime had continued to adapt its cyber activities on social

media. Haines said it was likely they continued to use intelligence assets and Iranian influencers to promote useful narratives.

White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre commented on Haines's statement during Tuesday's press briefing, saying that Iran and any other foreign actor that seeks to conduct these types of influence activities and stoke divisions is unacceptable.

The US will continue to

expose attempts to undermine its democracy and society, just as it is today, she said.

"The US government will continue to vigorously support and defend Americans in their exercise of their First Amendment rights to protest and express political views peacefully," Jean-Pierre said. "At the same time, we continue to warn against and expose foreign efforts to meddle in our internal affairs and attempt to amplify conflict."

The former is an essential part of a robust, functioning democracy, she added, the latter is a threat and "will not be tolerated."

Jean-Pierre said Biden has been briefed on this matter.

Secure Community Network said that it was important that a senior American official had publicly acknowledged Iran's role in the post-October 7 protest movement.

"Iran's brazen actions, in support of a growing, violent group of pro-Hamas supporters in American streets and on American campuses, is unacceptable and must be fought by the US government, local lead-

ers, university presidents and all who oppose a terrorist state influencing life in America," SCN Director and CEO Michael Masters said in a statement on Tuesday. "The pro-Hamas protests in the United States are dangerous and now we know they are being propped up by Iran."

The intelligence update came as part of a series of regular updates on malicious foreign activities seeking to influence US elections. The new procedure follows concerns by the US public about foreign influence in the 2016 and 2020 presidential and congressional elections.

Immediately following Hamas's October 7 massacre in southern Israel, mass protests erupted in the United States and the rest of the world. Protests have sought to disrupt public life and the flow of economic arteries, as well as advance anti-Israel policies in US institutions. The movement has seen violent attacks on pro-Israel institutions and people in North America, and widespread vandalism against businesses and Jewish sites.

President-elect of Iran says to keep backing Hezbollah

By SETH J. FRANTZMAN

Iranian state media reported Tuesday about a letter from Iran's President-elect Masoud Pezeshkian to Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah promising continued support for Hezbollah and other armed groups targeting Israel.

According to Iran's IRNA media the letter is "a clear message from the Islamic Republic to all the resistance groups in the region that Tehran will continue to support the Islamic resistance in West Asia, an Iranian expert of international affairs argued." West Asia refers to the Middle East in this context.

According to the same media report, Iran's goal is "support for resistance and jihadi groups."

Iran is pushing back against western media reports that portray Pezeshkian as a reformer or mod-

erate. The report speaks of "unfounded claims such as the end of Iran's support for resistance following Pezeshkian's victory." In fact IRNA now praises the "wise move taken by the president-elect in sending a letter to Nasrallah" which has now "foiled such conspiracies."

Iranian regime media sees this as a promise to support what they call "resistance" groups sanctioned as terrorist groups by the US and other western countries.

The overall context of this development is that Iran's policies will remain unchanged and the attacks on Israel will continue. Even this week the Houthis, Hezbollah, and Iraqi militias carried out attacks targeting Israel. There are also tensions on the Syrian side of the Golan, illustrating how Iran continues to mobilize numerous frontlines against Israel.

Statue honoring Anne Frank defaced with 'Gaza' graffiti

By MICHAEL STARR

A statue honoring famed teenage Holocaust diarist Anne Frank was vandalized with red paint and the word 'Gaza' on Tuesday, Dutch politicians said.

Amsterdam councillor Stijn Nijssen said on X that it was shameful to draw attention to the Palestinian cause by defacing the Holocaust memorial in the Rivierenbuurt neighborhood park.

Amsterdam Mayor Femke Halsema called on potential witnesses to report the incident to the police, saying that there was no excuse for such an action.

"This young girl, who was so brutally murdered by the Nazis at the age of 15, reminds us and our city every day of humanity and gentleness, in the most difficult circumstances. How can you get it in your heart to make her memory so violent? Whoever it was, shame on you!" Halsema said on Instagram. "No Palestinian has been helped by smearing her precious statue."

The European Jewish Congress said on Wednesday that it hoped the perpetrators were swiftly brought to justice for the act which was "not activism, but antisemitism."

"Such acts disrespect her memory and the six million Jews murdered during the Holocaust," said EJC.

The Center for Information



ANNE FRANK'S statue in Amsterdam. (FLICKR)

and Documentation Israel (CIDI) sarcastically remarked on social media that the statue's vandalism was another example of "anti-Zionism."

In April a CIDI report indicated that antisemitic incidents in the Netherlands increased by 245% in 2023 when compared to the previous year. In October, there was an 800% increase in reported incidents over the previous three Octobers.

The 379 recorded incidents were only 25% of the incidents reported to CIDI, which didn't include the others because motive couldn't be proven, did not fully meet the definition of antisemitism, or only entailed criticism of Israel.

Syria, Turkey could be headed for new era of ties

ANALYSIS

By SETH J. FRANTZMAN

In the latest sign that Syria and Turkey could be headed for reconciliation and normalized ties, a Syrian official gave an interview to Al-Ain media in the UAE in which he discussed the determinants of normalization with Turkey. "Is a positive breakthrough in Syrian-Turkish relations imminent?" the report asked.

This comes after reports over the weekend that Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan expressed interest in meeting Syrian President Bashar Assad. Reuters reported that Erdogan said he would extend an invitation to Assad at "any time." The report noted that Turkey's leader said "we will extend our invitation (to Assad); with this invitation, we want to restore Turkey-Syria relations to the same level as in the past. Our invitation may be extended at any time," Erdogan said.

The rumors of Ankara-Damascus rapprochement have caused anger in Turkish-occupied areas of northern Syria. Turkey had been backing the Syrian rebels during the civil war in Syria and Turkey hosts millions of Syrian refugees. However, ties have become strained. Turkey entered Syria in a series of military operations that date back to 2015. However, Turkey's involvement in Syria is more historic and complex. Modern Turkey, for instance, annexed the former Syrian region of the Sanjak of Alexandretta, what is now Hatay province in 1939. Turkey also pushed the Adana agreement on Syria in 1988 aimed at getting Syria to expel the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK).

Ankara's policy in the Syrian civil war was ostensibly in support of the Syrian opposition. However, Turkey opened its borders to foreign fighters who went to Turkey in 2012 and 2013 and fueled extremist groups, including ISIS. ISIS caused the international community to



SYRIA'S PRESIDENT Bashar Assad attends Eid al-Adha prayers at a mosque in Damascus last month. (SANA/via Reuters)

reduce support for the rebels and shift focus to helping groups fighting ISIS, such as the Kurdish People's Defense Units. Turkey then shifted policy in Syria, pushing the mostly Arab Syrian rebels to fight the Kurds. This culminated in Turkey's invasion of Afrin and the expulsion of 150,000 Kurds in 2018. Turkey then occupied the border area of Serekaniye in 2019.

Today Turkey's government is open to a new era of ties with Syria. Syria likely wants Turkey to leave areas in northern Syria. These areas have now been out of the control of Damascus for more than a decade. Other issues affect Turkey's policy. Anti-Syrian riots have taken place in Turkey. In northern Syria's Idlib and Afrin areas, the former Syrian rebel groups are angry about the treatment of Syrians in Turkey. Some people took matters into their own hands and ripped down Turkish flags. Turkey's state broadcaster TRT then paraded a few of these men on television forcing them to

apologize, and appearing to show Ankara had kidnapped them from Syria. This crisis likely points to a slow end of the warm ties between Ankara and the areas it occupies in Syria. Anti-Syrian racism is increasing in Turkey.

ABDULKADER AZZOUC, an adviser to the Syrian prime minister, spoke to Al-Ain media in the UAE about the path forward in Syria-Turkey ties. This is important because the Syrian regime sees ties in the Gulf as important. The Syrian regime does not often grant interviews and its statements are not always much more than the usual propaganda one gets from a regime deeply rooted in Ba'ath Party authoritarianism. "Recently, Turkish-Syrian statements reflected the two countries' readiness to turn the page on their deep differences and to break through the current situation to achieve rapprochement between Ankara and Damascus," stated the report.

Azzouz said that the "future of rela-

tions and reconciliation efforts between Syria and Turkey depends on the Turkish side, and its commitment to international resolutions, principles of international law, and good neighborly relations, which is the key to continuing the reconciliation steps and efforts." He noted that Damascus "supports all initiatives related to reconciliation efforts with Turkey, based on the state's sovereignty over all its territories on the one hand, and combating all forms of terrorism and its organizations on the other hand, and these initiatives reflect the will of the concerned countries to establish stability in Syria and the region."

He also said Syria's state institutions must be able to return to places in Syria that are controlled by outsiders, clearly a reference to Idlib, Afrin, and other areas. The US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces also controls eastern Syria. There is a proposal for Iraq to play a mediator role. Iraq did the same thing before Saudi-Iran reconciliation. "Syria and Iraq have been greatly affected by the state of instability. The opportunities, challenges and threats are common to all regional neighboring countries, hence the Iraqi side's keenness to launch an initiative for reconciliation between Turkey and Syria," the Syrian official said.

Syria appears to want to move forward with reconciliation with Turkey. There is "extensive discussion," the article said. The Syrian official blamed the Turkish "opposition" for recent attacks on Syrians in Turkey. Syria is a close ally of Russia and Turkey also works closely with Moscow. Turkey, Russia, and Iran all support Hamas. Syria is a staunch opponent of Israel and Iran uses Syria to move weapons to Hezbollah in Lebanon. Therefore, it is plausible that Turkey-Syria reconciliation could also come at the expense of Israel, because it could be seen as a way for Iran to use this to bring together more arenas against Israel.

GEERT WILDERS TELLS 'POST':

Mass immigration, no integration cause antisemitism

• By MICHAEL STARR

To stop rising antisemitism in the Netherlands and Europe political leaders must put an end to open border mass immigration and reverse the cultural relativist failure to foster integration, Dutch Party for Freedom founder and leader Geert Wilders told *The Jerusalem Post* in an interview on Wednesday, in which he also explained that his support for Israel was grounded in the broader defense of Western values.

After six months of negotiations, Prime Minister Dick Schoof's coalition was sworn in on Tuesday with the support of the Party for Freedom (PVV), which won the most seats in the 2023 Dutch General Election with a campaign prioritizing immigration policy.

The very same issues, "Mass immigration policy and open borders policy," were according to Wilders the source of increasing levels of antisemitism in Europe. These policies were detrimentally combined with "one of the biggest defaults of our societies, cultural relativism," which held that "for politically correct reasons" all cultures were considered equal and any criticism or any behavior within a culture is unacceptable.

"If we always open our borders, we never ask people to fully integrate into society, they [immigrants] would not talk our language and they will treat women or Jews or homosexuals or others in a way that we would not accept," said Wilders. "We closed our eyes and we looked in a different direction."

Wilders said that rising antisemitic incidents would not stop without a change in policies, which was why it was so crucial that his coalition was in government. The spike in antisemitism, as with many countries in Europe, followed in the wake of the October 7 Massacre, which Wilders pointed to as evidence of growing radical and antisemitic sentiments, especially among immigrant populations.

"We saw so many people walking in the streets, from Vienna to Paris, from Amsterdam to Berlin and London, and millions of them were supporting extremist groups – not the Palestinians – but Hamas and [Palestinian] Islamic Jihad in our streets," said Wilders. "We didn't even know that so many people who supported their ideology were present in

Europe, and it was the kind of wake-up sign, and it was one of the reasons that my party won the election because people saw that what we were talking about actually, is not a fairy tale but is happening and present in our societies."

Wilders was well acquainted with violent Islamic radicalism, having had to live with high-level security in the face of 20 years of fatwas and death threats.

WHILE STRONGLY emphasizing that not all Dutch Muslims were radicals, Wilders said that polling had indicated troubling beliefs among a significant number of Muslims in the Netherlands. Large percentages would not consider friendships with Jews, and many supported Sharia Law's importance over civil law.

"It's a huge amount and we need to accept it and then deal with it," said Wilders, making it necessary to establish a red line of behavior and pro-integration principles.

"If you abide by our rules, if you live in cooperation with our society, if you don't fight our values, and once again, don't upset the laws, then you are welcome, equal as anybody else in our society; you can achieve everything that you want, you can become a parliamentarian, you can go far in business, and there are no boundaries to the possibilities if you integrate with us as anybody else," said Wilders. "If you start using violence or being antisemitic or do anything else, we will not accept it."

Wilders advocated for the passing of tougher legislation against those "growing amounts" of people who were against Dutch values to protect society and democracy. One policy that the major Dutch political figure sought was to make it easier for noncitizen criminals and violators to lose residency permits and be deported. Wilders also desired strong instilling of Western values and teaching of Dutch history in schools to combat radicalism.

"Many teachers in our schools are afraid to teach about World War II and about the Shoah because they are afraid what might happen – that they will not be able to control the children in their classes and that the parents will become angry," said Wilders. "We have to start even in our schools, to be honest and talk about the effects of Nazism, the



DUTCH FAR-RIGHT leader Geert Wilders poses with his ballot paper while voting in an EU election in The Hague last month. (Lewis Macdonald/Reuters)

Holocaust, and antisemitism and many other things that are not discussed today. In many schools, not only in Holland, in the European Union, this is something that is a token of weakness."

Wilders said that there was nonpartisan agreement on the need to fight antisemitism. This included support from the opposition, between antisemitism, cultural relativism, and immigration.

Europe as a whole was slowly waking up to the challenges of immigration and integration, Wilders said. While recent European elections saw France's right-wing National Rally (RN) ultimately failing to secure more seats than the left-wing New Popular Front, and the UK's Labour Party won a majority government to replace the Conservative Party,

the Dutch politicians still saw overall success for the political Right.

"I believe that the most you can go is slowly but gradually, and things are changing for the better," said Wilders, but bemoaned that it was going "too slow to fight antisemitism... we should move faster."

WILDERS HAD to negotiate six months with three other parties after PVV won elections, and required compromise. There was no European nation besides Hungary in which there was a majority Right government, but he still saw progress across Europe, from Austria to Belgium. Even in France and the UK, Wilders saw success. Marine Le Pen's RN and the UK Reform Party's Nigel Farage received massive popular support, but because

of the construction of the electoral systems, this didn't necessarily translate into seats. While there might not have increased political power, the Right was winning more hearts and minds.

In France, as with other elections with a competitive right flank, National Rally grappled with its own antisemitic past. Wilders emphasized that his party was "from day one" a friend of Israel and the Jewish people, even when receiving backlash from further right elements. Not only did he argue that PVV never had a past like RN, Wilders said his party wouldn't have become allies with Le Pen in the European Parliament if he wasn't confident in her reforms to repudiate and distance herself from the antisemitism of her father and his iteration of the party.

"She's a good politician," Wilders said of Le Pen. "She fights for the interests of France and she's fighting antisemitism side-by-side with me."

Wilders saw the right's fight for Western values as intertwined with Israel's existential fight against jihadist groups like Hamas and Hezbollah.

"We should support the country that shares our values. And if you will be lost, we will be next. I truly believe that," said Wilders. Israel is "the only democracy, the only country, that we share our values with in the Middle East, a country where, as you have seen, you have an independent judiciary, your presidents or prime ministers can be taken to court, as it should be working in a normal democracy. You have a parliament that can send the prime minister home, you have a civil society that is functioning. So we share our values, and I believe that Judeo-Christian values – besides humanistic values – are something that we should be proud of. You're, as I often said, a beacon of light and in an area of darkness."

OCTOBER 7 showed that Israel was fighting for its existence and that the ongoing conflicts in the Levant weren't just about land, which Wilders said was a misconception held by many politicians in the West. He recalled his conversations with former prime minister Ariel Sharon, who he called his friend. Sharon made the decision that Wilders respected to cede Gaza to Palestinian control, but it did not solve the problem of Islamic radicals.

"It's not like you can solve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict by giving up land," said Wilders, explaining that radicals in Islamic society wanted the complete destruction of Israel on any part of the land. "If we don't support Israel there will be no Israel left. That doesn't mean that everything Israel does is good, but they are understandable because they need to react against people who want no state of Israel and Jewish people left."

Wilders had experienced the hatred that some people in the Middle East held for Israel when traveling in countries like Egypt when he was a young man. He said it was tragic how when Israel was mentioned, people he had cordial interactions with became incensed. Consequently, he was shocked, but not surprised by the atrocities of Hamas's October 7 attack.

The impact of October 7 was comparable to the September 11 attacks, Wilders mused, but for Israeli society perhaps more impactful because a relatively larger portion of the Israeli population had been murdered or maimed.

"If you start a war, don't complain that you are losing," Wilders said of Hamas and its complaints about Israeli action.

The Dutch leader also was not surprised by how quickly international political reactions shifted in a short time when Israel reacted to Hamas's attack. Wilders felt that the most important support he could provide to Israel was diplomatic support, to spread understanding that Israel was fighting for its existence against Hamas and Hezbollah.

"Diplomatic support is the most important thing that we can give today, that is lacking unfortunately," said Wilders, who said that politicians should engage in courage, and stand for friends like Israel and those that share Western values even if it came at political expense. Some in the Dutch opposition wished to engage in economic sanctions against Israel, which Wilders said he was against.

Wilders is also against potential International Criminal Court warrants against Israeli officials like Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. He couldn't speak on behalf of the government and the Dutch prime minister, but he believed it would be a mistake to detain Israeli officials if warrants were in effect.

In his coalition, Wilders said that there was consensus on support for the State of Israel, and as part of the political agreement, eventually they would move the Dutch embassy to Jerusalem.

In a message to Israelis, Wilders said "Don't give up. You have friends."

"There is a lot of support amongst our people. For the fight that you are fighting, you are not alone. You will never be alone. You have friends. I hope to be one of your best friends. But I'm certainly not the only one," said Wilders. "Parents in the Netherlands sleep well at night because Israeli parents wake up and are not sleeping because they think about what is happening to their sons and daughters fighting the fights that sooner or later would be our fight as well – the fight against radicalism and barbarism."

Pro-Palestinian groups sued over protest outside LA synagogue

• By RUBEN VIVES

LOS ANGELES – A local Jewish man has filed a lawsuit against two groups that led a demonstration outside a Los Angeles synagogue last month that ended in violence and national condemnation against the demonstrators, including from President Joe Biden and Mayor Karen Bass.

Mark Javich, attorney for plaintiff Ronen Helmann of Los Angeles, filed the lawsuit Sunday against Code Pink, a feminist antiwar organization, and the Palestinian Youth Movement, a grassroots group of Palestinians opposing Zionism and calling for a ceasefire in Gaza.

The lawsuit alleges that the organizations targeted the Adas Torah synagogue in the Jewish Pico-Robertson neighborhood on June 23 to "cause chaos, violence, and block the entrance to the synagogue, all because of their hatred of Zionism [and] the Jewish connection to the land of Israel."

The complaint also claims that the two groups conspired or failed to prevent the violation of Helmann's First Amendment right to worship. Representatives for Code Pink and the Palestinian Youth Movement did not immediately respond to requests for comments. The groups have said that



PRO-PALESTINIAN and pro-Israel protesters face off near Adas Torah synagogue in Los Angeles last month. (Zoe Cranfill/Los Angeles Times/TNS)

the protest was spurred not by antisemitism, but by a real estate event at the synagogue. An advertisement for the event in *The Jewish Journal* said that information on "housing projects in all the best Anglo neighborhoods in Israel" would be provided.

According to an archive of the website for My Home in Israel, one of the companies mentioned in the advertisement, homes were listed for \$435,000 to \$4.1 million in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and the West Bank territories of Efrat and Ariel. Much of the international community – including the Biden administration and the United Nations – considers settle-

ments in the West Bank to be illegal under international law, although the Israeli government disagrees.

The lawsuit says that the event also included religious education and "opportunities for members of the Los Angeles Jewish community to make Aliyah, or to fulfill their Biblical obligation to live in the land of Israel."

It also claims that Helmann approached the synagogue and was immediately surrounded by a group of demonstrators, some recording him with their cellphones, calling him a Nazi, a baby murderer and a colonizer. Demonstrators, it says, shouted threatening and antisemitic remarks

at him, such as "Leave the neighborhood, we are coming" and "Slaughter the Jews."

The lawsuit alleges that Helmann saw masked demonstrators walking house to house, looking for Jewish doorposts before taking photos of the homes and cars associated with them.

The demonstration that Sunday eventually ended in violence when fights broke out between supporters of Israel and supporters of Palestinians.

The Los Angeles Police Department, which said more than 150 people were at the demonstration, eventually was able to clear the area. A pro-Israel counterprotester was temporarily detained and cited for carrying a sharp pole.

The violence prompted the US Attorney General Merrick Garland to call for a federal inquiry into the demonstration.

Helmann is seeking compensatory and punitive damages, as well as attorney fees.

"We must hold them accountable for violating laws that protect access to synagogues," Javich said in an email Tuesday. "Singling out a local synagogue merely because they are holding an event related to Israel is unacceptable and must be met with an appropriate response." (Los Angeles Times/TNS)

Oakland shul windows smashed twice in fortnight

• By MICHAEL STARR

An Oakland synagogue's window was smashed on Saturday in the second vandalism attack in two weeks, the Oakland Police Department and Chabad Oakland announced on Monday.

The first incident at the Chabad Jewish Center of Oakland and Piedmont occurred on June 21. In both midnight attacks, "an unknown suspect or suspects were seen throwing a large object at the synagogue's window."

The police said that they were investigating the incidents as a potential hate crime, and had met with the rabbi.

Chabad Oakland published pictures of the large blocks and cracked bullet-resistant glass windows, which would need to be replaced.

The Jewish organization said that they were launching a campaign to raise \$20,000 to cover security costs. Security assessments, security measures, and armed guards were already costing Chabad over \$30,000 annually, it said.

"With the unfortunate reality of rising antisemitism and incidents of violence in the recent past, our center must be secure and safe for our families," said Chabad. "May G-d continue to watch over us and provide a safe and secure place

for us all to learn, pray and celebrate our Judaism."

The police called on the public to provide any information or documentation of the incident.

Jewish Community Relations Council Bay Area on Monday called on the police to protect the Jewish community, saying that there had been an increase in antisemitism in the area, including pro-Hamas graffiti and the destruction of

a menorah installation.

Chabad said on its website that a menorah at Lake Merritt was "destroyed and desecrated" in December.

"We are stronger than hate," said Chabad. "The holiday of Hanukkah celebrates the 2,000-year-old victory of the few over the many and of light over darkness. Our light was challenged in those times, and in ours, but is inextinguishable!"



International Public Tender No. 5/2024

For Supplying and Installing an Active GPS-Based System for Electronic Seals to Monitor and Supervise (Online) Shipping Container and Operationally Leased Truck Movement (hereinafter: "the Tender")

The Israel Tax Authority announces an update for the tour of suppliers location in the Tender as follows:

A tour of suppliers will be held at the Haifa Screening Site on Haifa's Shemen Beach on July 25, 2024 at 10 a.m. in the discussion room on the 1st floor ("type in Waze 'Haifa Customs Screening Site'). Participation in the tour of suppliers is mandatory.

A bidder/representative on behalf of a bidder who does not participate in the tour of suppliers will have their bid rejected outright. Due to security and safety guidelines at the entrance to these facilities, it is necessary to coordinate arrival and obtain permission in advance to participate in the suppliers' conference with the office representative by phone at 050-8479998.

For the avoidance of doubt, it will be clarified that there is no change in the other clauses of the agreement and/or the Tender documents.

Bol awaits digital euro before digital shekel launch

• By STEVEN SCHEER

The Bank of Israel (BoI) remains committed to plans for a digital shekel currency to improve Israel's payments system and to foster innovation, but is unlikely to launch one ahead of other advanced economies.

"We're all waiting for the first western central bank to pull the trigger, which is almost certainly going to be the ECB (European Central Bank). And then you may see a rush of countries going forward with it," Bank of Israel Deputy Governor Andrew Abir told Reuters.

As of March, 134 countries representing 98% of the global economy were exploring digital versions of their currencies, which would eventually replace cash. Some countries, such as China, are in advanced stages of pilot programs, while the US Federal Reserve is lagging.

The BoI first began looking into a possible central bank digital currency (CBDC) in 2017 as a way of creating a more efficient payments system and stepped up its research and preparation in November 2020.

The bank has been experimenting with a digital shekel

along with its Hong Kong, Swedish and Norwegian counterparts, as well as the Bank for International Settlements. It has invited both fintech and traditional financial companies to participate in its project, known as the "Digital Shekel Challenge" to demonstrate possible use cases.

Despite the planning and an increasingly digital global economy, the BoI still says it cannot be sure it will ultimately launch a digital shekel. Its experiment is considered an "action plan" to be ready when the bank deems appropriate and necessary.

Similarly, the ECB has said it is likely, but not inevitable, that a digital euro would be introduced in Europe, which is dependent on cross-border payment services from elsewhere, particularly US giants Visa and Mastercard.

"The big question is whether the public will adopt a digital currency," Abir said, adding the BoI is doing a behavioral study on the subject.

"There's a big jump from some study to persuading people to use it. You have to have a good set of use cases."

Abir wants an eventual digital currency to pay interest to

create competition with bank deposits and provide an incentive for the public to hold it.

Israel's banking system is highly concentrated, with two large banks dominating more than 60% of the market.

"The main incentive for us is to create a level playing field for payment providers and allow them to compete with the banks," he said.

"An advantage of a CBDC is that the payment provider does not hold your money so you don't (have) a credit exposure to that company. This allows a lower level of supervision and capital requirement than a

traditional payments provider that holds your money, even for brief moments in time."

A digital shekel, Abir said, will allow the public to pay with the central bank's money "everywhere and in any transaction we choose."

Should the BoI decide to launch a digital shekel, it would most likely need approval from the finance and justice ministries.

"It will take time before it enters all of our lives if we decide to implement it," Abir said. "But it has the potential to be the next revolution in payment systems." (Reuters)



ANDREW ABIR
(Ammar Awad/Reuters)

New airline Air Haifa set to get first plane

• By STAV LIVNE

Air Haifa announced this week that it will receive the first aircraft in its fleet at the end of this month.

The plane, a brand new ATR 72-600 turboprop arrive from Toulouse, France and land at Haifa International airport.

The advanced turboprop has 72 seats and Air Haifa has said it will receive two more such planes in the coming months.

Air Haifa is in advanced stages of a process of receiving its operating license from Israel's Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) that the new airline expects to complete in September when it will begin selling tickets and operating scheduled flights from Haifa.

Air Haifa is expected to oper-



HAIFA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT is expected to operate flights to Eilat, Cyprus, Greece, and Turkey. (Marc Israel Sellem/The Jerusalem Post)

ate flights between Haifa and Eilat as well as to destinations in the eastern Mediterranean in Cyprus and Greece.

Several big local names are backing Air Haifa. Among its founders are the entrepreneur

and founder of cybersecurity company Palo Alto Networks, Nir Zuk, Strauss Group CEO Shai Babad; former El Al CEO Gonen Usishkin; former El Al VP marketing Michael Strassburger, and

former ZIM CEO Rafi Danieli.

Air Haifa co-founder and CEO Usishkin said, "We are very excited... Air Haifa is the first Israeli airline founded since the 1990s, and we are proud, especially at this time, to be the first commercial airline in the country's history whose base of operations is at Haifa International Airport. We await the completion of the company's licensing process, and upon its completion and receipt of the licenses required by the Civil Aviation Authority, we will announce the launch date and start selling tickets."

The Transport Ministry said, "In a professional discussion held yesterday at Haifa Municipality, Minister Miri Regev said that at the end of the month the first Air Haifa plane will

land in Israel, and immediately after that the official licensing process will begin. The company's commercial flights will operate during the month of September.

"The entry of the new company into the market is an historic precedent, in which for the first time in decades, Minister Regev worked together with the director-general of her ministry and with the Civil Aviation Authority to introduce another Israeli airline to operate in the State of Israel... to increase competition and strengthen connectivity within Israel and abroad. The company will operate flights from Haifa to Eilat as well as to nearby destinations in Europe and the Mediterranean basin such as Greece and Turkey." (Globes/TNS)

Tesla slashes car prices in Israel

• By DUBI BEN-GEDALYAHU

Electric vehicle manufacturer Tesla has cut prices by thousands and even tens of thousands of shekels on most of its popular models sold in Israel.

For the first time in almost 18 months the basic model 3 car is being offered for NIS 198,000, down by NIS 14,000 from its previous tag. The long-range model now costs NIS 228,700, down NIS 13,000, while the price of the Performance model remains unchanged.

The Tesla model Y, the company's best-selling car, now costs NIS 219,000 in Israel instead of

NIS 236,000. The long-range model costs NIS 256,000, down from NIS 282,000 and the Performance version costs NIS 284,000, down from NIS 291,000.

Almost all these models are available for delivery in July-August, which suggests that supply is from unsold inventory already in Israel rather than new orders to the factory.

The latest price cuts come even though purchase tax on electric vehicles rose from 20% to 35% at the start of 2024. Taking into account the higher purchase tax, the latest Tesla price cuts are even sharper than they seem. (Globes/TNS)

Knesset tweaking details of judicial system oversight bill

Opposition MK: Rothman looking to enact coup d'etat

• By ELIAV BREUER

The Knesset Constitution Committee began on Tuesday to prepare a bill for its first reading that members of the opposition claim were part of the government's controversial 2023 judicial reforms.

The bill proposed to change the process to elect an ombudsman for Israel's court system. According to the current law, the appointment is a joint agreement between the justice minister and the Supreme Court chief justice, and is approved by the Judicial Selection Committee. The new law would shift that power to the Knesset, and would require a majority of 70 members of Knesset in a discreet vote. In addition, the new law specifies that the ombudsman would not necessarily need to be a retired judge, which is the current custom but can be anyone proposed by the justice minister or a group of 10 MKs.

The ombudsman is responsible for investigating public complaints against judges.

Critics of the law, including the attorney general's office, have argued that this would lead to the politicization of the sensitive position, as it could lead to a scenario in which the ombudsman becomes associated with one side of the political

map and their investigations into judges would then lose public trust.

Constitution Committee chairman MK Simcha Rothman (Religious Zionism Party), however, has argued that the 70 MK majority and discreet vote would ensure enough agreement across the aisle to retain public trust.

The former ombudsman retired in May, and Justice Minister Yairiv Levin and Temporary Chief Justice Uzi Fogelman were unable to agree on a candidate, as Fogelman insisted on appointing a retired judge, and Levin refused. Rothman explained during Tuesday's debate that the bill's purpose was to avoid the situation of the lack of an ombudsman in the future.

However, representatives of the attorney general's office, members of the opposition, and even a member of Knesset from the coalition, Likud MK Tally Gotliv, pointed out that if 70 MKs did not agree on a candidate, the law did not include a mechanism to ensure that someone was appointed, and therefore the new law did not solve the problem.

Opposition coordinator MK Merav Ben Ari (Yesh Atid) warned that if Rothman moved forward with the law, the opposition would propose thousands of reservations

in order to bog it down. The opposition used similar tactics against the laws connected to the judicial reform in 2023.

Labor MK Gilad Kariv, who chaired the Knesset Constitution Committee, said in a statement, "MK Rothman's proposal is a 'test of the waters' to fully return to the coup de d'etat. If Rothman and his colleagues are interested in appointing an ombudsman for the court system, there are many solutions on the table. But what they care about is removing the authority to appoint (the ombudsman) from the Judicial Selection Committee, and shift it to politicians. After electing the ombudsman in the Knesset, we will move to electing the chief justice and High Court justices, and from there to the rest of the judges," Kariv said.

Rothman countered by pointing out that the fact that the chief justice was involved in appointing the person who would be responsible for hearing complaints against him was problematic. He called out what he said was the opposition's "bluff," arguing that the fact that they opposed the bill despite it requiring the agreement of 70 MKs – and not the 61-member simple majority – showed that they were not actually interested in reaching broad agreements.

Ex-Philippines police officers arrested for killing of Israeli linked to land scam

• Jerusalem Post Staff

Two former police officers were arrested on Tuesday in the Philippines, and another was detained for alleged involvement in the disappearance and murder of Yitzhak Cohen and his fiancée, beauty queen Geneva Lopez, local sources reported.

In a press briefing at Camp Crame on Monday, Interior Minister Benhur Abalos and Philippine National Police Chief General Rommel Marbil told the media about the two suspects, adding they had a "significant role" in the murder.

The two former police officers – Michael Angelo Guyang and Rommel Abuzo – are suspected of shooting the couple over a land dispute. "Guyang did not want to give up the land he had mortgaged to Geneva," said Criminal Investigation and Detection Group of the Philippine National Police officer Leo Francisco. "Guyang said there was also a buyer for the land he had mortgaged and introduced Abuzo to Geneva as the buyer."

"From that point, they arranged to meet, and the two former police officers shot the couple," Francisco added.

"The day before, based on our investigation, Guyang and Abuzo discussed how to deal with the couple. That's when they hatched the plan to kill them."

However, Marbil also suggested that the primary objective of the murder was robbery, stating that investigators are examining that possibility, Philippine's CBN television network ABS-CBN reported on Monday.

According to another report, Guyang previously stated he had met the couple and traveled with them to inspect the land they had possibly intended to buy at Armenia village in Tarlac City. In his sworn statement, Guyang claimed the meeting was short.

The police suspect multiple people involved in the crime: the two former police officers who were arrested, another former police officer, identified as Jeffrey Santos, who was detained, and at least two more who are still at large.

The former police officers were arrested as part of a police illegal possession of firearms investigation on Saturday, the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* further reported. Since their arrest, the suspects have been named

as persons of interest in connection with the Cohen-Lopez incident, and on Monday, police confirmed they are suspects.

This development came two days after the couple's Nissan car, which they drove to inspect the land they had intended to purchase, was found burned in Capas town in the Tarlac province. A few days later, the bodies of Cohen and his fiancée were found in a nearby quarry.

Agricultural land scams are well-known to authorities in the Philippines, where locals lure foreigners into purchasing land, swindle them, and, in extreme cases, murder them and dispose of their bodies.

"There was hope that they would be found alive. There were extensive searches, and the local police were optimistic. Unfortunately, that did not happen," noted a source familiar with the case details and in contact with officials at the Foreign Ministry.

"It appears they were lured into a trap, a sort of 'Little Red Riding Hood' scenario, to avoid paying them the money owed. They were invited to a meeting, kidnapped, and murdered to eliminate evidence and avoid paying the debt."

Tens of thousands visit grave of Lubavitcher Rebbe on 30th anniversary of his death

• By LUKE TRESS/JTA

Hundreds of Hassidim crowded into a squat building at a cemetery in Queens, New York, on Monday, sitting shoulder-to-shoulder at cafeteria-style tables, studying Jewish texts and preparing to visit the gravesite of their late leader.

The men were some of the 50,000 people who this week visited the gravesite of Chabad-Lubavitch Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, known as the Rebbe, to mark the Jewish anniversary of his death, which fell on Monday night and Tuesday. Some had met the rebbe when he held court at Chabad's home base of Crown Heights, Brooklyn.

But for those born after his passing 30 years ago, a visit to the Ohel, as his gravesite is known, is the closest they can physically be to the last leader of their global movement.

"People of my generation, we have a yearning," said Levi Shmotkin, 26, who was one of the visitors to the Old Montefiore Cemetery on Schneerson's yahrzeit. "Instead of me studying the rebbe's interaction with another teenager, I wish I could be that teenager."

Like some other Chabadniks under 30, Shmotkin has immersed himself in Schneerson's teachings, which are organized in compendia of letters he wrote and talks he gave in Crown Heights.

Shmotkin felt drawn to the letters Schneerson exchanged with those seeking his counseling. He has now published his own book on the correspondence, called "Letters for Life."

"It is only after the teacher leaves and the students are left alone that the students can then take apart and really understand what the teacher said," Shmotkin said while

visiting the site. He spent five years organizing Schneerson's 13,000 archived letters thematically, with a focus on emotional wellness.

"We didn't have that all-encompassing experience of being in the Rebbe's presence. That gives us the ability to dissect what he's saying and make a comprehensive picture of it," Shmotkin said.

Chabad has not had a leader since Schneerson – the seventh rebbe of the movement, which was founded in the 18th century in the Russian Empire. In the years following his passing, a contingent of Hassidim have professed that he is the messiah, creating tensions in the movement.

Those tensions were absent on Monday night, when visitors packed into Schneerson's walled gravesite, where he is buried alongside his father-in-law and predecessor, Yosef Yitzchok Schneerson.

Men and women filed into

the enclosure and, per Orthodox practice, stood with a barrier between them. Nearly all said prayers or left notes on top of the graves. One man left several pictures of Israeli hostages held in Gaza and said a prayer wishing for their safe return.

A long line wound outside the tomb into the street outside, where attendees lit candles in the hot summer night.

Over the decades, the Ohel has become a pilgrimage site for celebrities and politicians as well as Chabad Hassidim. At 1 a.m. on Tuesday morning, New York City Mayor Eric Adams became one of the thousands who visited the grave.

"His influence shaped our city for the better by reminding us that even small deeds can change the world," Adams posted on X. "Let's honor his worldwide legacy by increasing our acts of kindness."



THE BILL proposes to change the process to elect an ombudsman for Israel's court system. (Marc Israel Sellem/The Jerusalem Post)

Histadrut head backs march to J'lem by hostage families

• By EVE YOUNG
and YAEL HALFON

Labor federation head Arnon Bar-David on Wednesday threw his support behind a march planned by family members of hostages and called on the Israeli public to join them. Bar-David also said he would supply the march with resources, and appointed a senior team to accompany marchers and organizers.

The march, a protest meant to increase pressure on Israel's leadership to bring about a hostage deal, left from outside the Kirya military headquarters in Tel Aviv Wednesday afternoon and participants will walk for four days and arrive in Jerusalem Saturday night.

Protests have been ramping up in the last week, and media reports over the weekend that Hamas has made a counter-offer for a hostage deal that Israeli officials say is close to one Israel can accept, have only caused these to intensify.

"The ability to close a deal that will bring the hostages home is the most important mission of [Israel's] leadership, and the only measure of its strength," said Bar-David.

"On October 7, the State of Israel failed in its most basic task – to defend its citizens," he said.

"I call on the prime minister to come to his senses and do everything to bring our sons and daughters home," he concluded.

Einav Zangauker, mother of hostage Matan Zangauker, and Dani Elgarat, brother of hostage Yitzhak Elgarat were



RELATIVES OF hostages begin a march in Tel Aviv towards Jerusalem yesterday. (Tomer Neuberger/Flash90)

both among the family members leading the march.

"This morning an investigation was published that shows that time after time there were deals on the table and [Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu torpedoed them," said Zangauker.

"We are now at the moment of truth for a deal," she added, asking the public to join her in the march to "ensure that no one torpedoed a deal."

"We won't give up on the hostages. We won't give up on a deal," said Elgarat.

Protests organizations and the family members of hostages have been calling on Bar-David to call for a general strike that would shut down Israel's economy, to increase

pressure on Israel's political echelon to make a hostage deal happen.

Thousands marched to the Histadrut House as part of a day of disruption Sunday, which was the fourth day of a string of protests that took place over last weekend.

Last year, Bar-David famously called a general strike the day after "Gallant Night," the night of intense protests that followed the firing of Defense Minister Yoav Gallant by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during protests over the judicial reform.

The firing came after Gallant called on Netanyahu to halt the controversial judicial reforms due to potential damage to Israel's national security.

Following mass protests, the firing was eventually retracted, and the events set off a chain reaction that led to a cessation of the reform in favor of negotiations at the President's Residence.

That strike had an estimated cost of NIS 2.5 billion, Ynet reported, adding that the estimated lost national product of a general strike in which Israel's entire economy shuts down is NIS 5.8b. per day.

Bar-David has been critical of the government and its handling of the war. He has also called for elections to be scheduled in past months, Israeli media reported.

Eliv Breuer contributed to this report.

FORMER POLISH PM MORAWIECKI:

Only the Germans were responsible for Holocaust, no Polish involvement

• Jerusalem Post Staff

Former Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki has re-asserted the view that Germans alone were responsible for the Holocaust and has urged to correct any accusations of Polish involvement. In a forceful post on X, Morawiecki addressed ongoing controversies regarding Poland's role in the Holocaust.

His statement, posted on his official X account, criticized what he called "nonsense" published by a historian in the English-language press, and emphasized Poland's stance on Holocaust responsibility.

"When more nonsense from a historical diletante with (unfortunately) an academic title appeared in the English-language *Jewish Quarterly*, it was the duty of every decent Pole to correct these falsehoods," Morawiecki tweeted.

He further called on the Polish government and its leaders, including Prime Minister Donald Tusk, to address and refute claims about Poland's co-responsibility for the Holocaust. "As a historian, I cannot remain indifferent to the continuous false claims of Mr. Grabowski," he added, referring to the historian whose work sparked the controversy.

The Jewish Quarterly is an independent publication that has been cultivating high-standard literary journalism for nearly 70 years. Originally founded in the UK in 1953 by Jacob Sonntag, it focuses on exploring Jewish issues and broader cultural and political topics from a Jewish perspective. In 2021, the publication was relaunched by Australian publisher Morry Schwartz, making it accessible worldwide.

This tweet came in the wake of renewed debates over Poland's controversial Holocaust law, which was passed in 2018. The law criminalized the attribution of Nazi crimes to the Polish nation, sparking an international outcry and straining Poland's relations with Israel and Jewish organizations globally.

Although the penal provisions of the law were later removed, the debate over historical narratives continued to provoke strong reactions.

"The nonsense regarding any co-responsibility

of the Polish nation for the Holocaust must end once and for all!" he declared, reinforcing his position that Poland and its citizens played a heroic role during this dark chapter of history.

He also emphasized, "Jews who survived the cataclysm of the German occupation survived thanks to Poles," and noted the significance of the Righteous Among the Nations trees at Yad Vashem. "In the Garden of the Righteous at the Yad Vashem Institute, thousands of olive trees grow in memory of those who helped Jews during World War II. Check how many of them are dedicated to Polish citizens..."

Morawiecki's tweet reflected Poland's ongoing effort to counter claims that suggested Polish complicity in the Holocaust.

He reiterated that the Germans were solely responsible for the Holocaust and highlighted the efforts of the Polish Underground State in saving Jews and punishing their murderers.

The historical context of Morawiecki's tweet lay in the complex and often contentious relationship between Poland and its Jewish history. The Polish government had frequently sought to defend its national narrative against accusations of collaboration with Nazi occupiers, emphasizing the suffering of Poles during the war and their efforts to help Jews.

Morawiecki served as Poland's prime minister from 2017 to 2023. A member of the Law and Justice (PiS) party, he held various roles, including deputy prime minister and finance minister.

He played a significant role in Poland's economic policies and was involved in several controversies, including the Pegasus spyware scandal and his comments on Holocaust perpetrators, which drew international criticism. His tenure ended when his party lost its majority in the 2023 election, leading to Tusk's succession.

Morawiecki's statements on the Holocaust, particularly his 2018 remarks suggesting that members of multiple nationalities, including Jews, were perpetrators, sparked significant backlash from Israeli leaders and the international community. The controversy highlighted the sensitivity of Holocaust memory and the need for careful handling of historical issues.

Doxxed and disciplined: US students count cost of Gaza protests

• By DAVID SHERFINSKI

RICHMOND, Virginia (Thomson Reuters Foundation) – Sam Law, a graduate student at the University of Texas at Austin, was one of roughly 80 people arrested and charged with criminal trespassing for protesting the war in Gaza on his campus at the end of April.

Someone had apparently read a dispersal order over a loudspeaker at that April 29 protest, Law said, citing his arrest affidavit, but he doesn't remember hearing one.

"I was on my own campus exercising my right to speak," he said.

US universities have been rocked by waves of anti-war protests, with police and protesters clashing at times amid questions raised over forceful methods used to disperse the rallies and encampments.

On Law's campus, officers clad in riot gear and mounted on horseback swept away demonstrations in late

April, arresting dozens of people days before the graduate student was himself arrested.

Now, many students fear they will be penalized academically or even professionally as they prepare to enter the workforce or return to classes in coming months.

Law and those arrested with him had their criminal trespass charges dropped but now they face the prospect of disciplinary action from the university itself.

In recent weeks, they have received messages from college authorities asking them why they didn't disperse, if they agreed their conduct on the day was disruptive, and what they would tell a fellow student "who had their lives or education negatively impacted by your conduct," according to emailed questions seen by the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Some now face the prospect of disciplinary action like probation or suspension, according to local media.

"Lots of people are deeply worried," Law said.

Dylan Saba, staff attorney with Palestine Legal, said the advocacy group responded to more than 1,000 requests for help between October 7, the day of the Hamas massacre, and the end of last year.

"Key among them are doxxing in relation to pro-Palestine advocacy and expression, disciplinary actions and charges from universities, and then also issues of employment discrimination," he said.

Law found himself a target of doxxing – the malicious posting of personal information – after his image ended up online.

"I was sort of soft-doxxed where a lot of random right-wing Twitter accounts were just like, 'this is Sam Law. He's a graduate student at University of Texas. Do you support this pro-Hamas graduate student studying in your department? We need answers.' That kind of thing," he said.

At the same time, many Jewish students and faculty members have been dealing with antisemitic abuse and discrimination as Israel's offensive on Gaza has continued.

IN RESPONSE TO the terror raid which killed some 1,200 mostly sleeping men, women and children, Israel launched a military offensive in the Gaza Strip that has killed more than 38,000 Palestinians, according to Hamas-run Gaza health authorities, though one-third of these deaths have not been verified according to UN sources, and some 14,000 of the dead were combatants, Israel says.

"There are students who have told us that they are planning to transfer or who have transferred out of their universities because of antisemitism," said Kenneth Marcus, founder and chairman of the nonprofit Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law, a Jewish rights advocacy group that has filed a number of civil

rights complaints against universities since October 7.

"That's something we've heard from time to time over the years, but we're hearing more of it – by far – lately," he said. "Jewish students also have been physically assaulted, they've been threatened. They've been verbally assaulted."

The nationwide campus protests, spurred in part by encampments that began in April at Columbia University and elsewhere, have led to more than 3,000 arrests in recent months.

Even as classes wound down and many students headed home for the summer, the protests continued. More than a dozen students were arrested in June at Stanford University after they occupied the president's office.

Saba said the situation on campuses could be a watershed moment for the pro-Palestinian movement.

"The disciplinary actions are happening on such a wide scale and in

such a public fashion that I do think that a lot of people recognize this as a major political, cultural moment," he said.

The University of Texas at Austin confirmed it had issued discipline notices to students for rules violations but a spokesperson said it does not administer "professional or academic consequences" for protesting.

"The actions and stated intentions of those participating (on April 24 and 29) stand in stark contrast to no fewer than 13 previous pro-Palestinian free speech events on our campus since October, which took place largely without incident," the university said in a statement.

"The University of Texas at Austin will continue to support the constitutional rights to free speech of all individuals on our campus and will also enforce our rules, while providing due process and holding students, faculty, staff and visitors accountable."

IDF

Continued from Page 1

Further, the IDF has been attacking Hamas and Islamic Jihad operatives almost daily, noting their hiding in civilian locations, such as schools or UNRWA buildings.

It was unclear at press time which narrative was accurate.

Also, Sgt.-Maj. (res.) Tal Lahat was killed in battle while fighting in central Gaza, the IDF announced on Wednesday.

Sgt.-Maj. Lahat, 21, from Kfar Saba, served in the Maglan unit of the Commando Brigade.

Two soldiers from the Alexandroni Brigade were seriously wounded in a battle also in central Gaza.

The soldiers were evacuated for medical treatment.

In the North, Noa and Nir Baranes were named on Wednesday as the couple killed during Tuesday's Hezbollah rocket barrage toward the Golan Heights.

The two were 46 years old and left behind three children.

The two were killed by a direct hit to their vehicle following a heavy rocket barrage fired by Hezbollah at the Golan Heights.

On the Syrian border, the IDF attacked infrastructure associated with the Syrian army in the Golan Heights, which the military said contradicted

the Disengagement agreement between Israel and Syria (1974), the IDF announced on Wednesday.

After the 1974 agreement, the Syrian military abandoned various structures near the border.

Recently, Syrian military personnel, or possibly Hezbollah fighters, have tried returning more than once to these structures to conduct surveillance and intelligence collection against the IDF.

The IDF destroyed the structures to prevent these activities that violate the agreement.

Moreover, the IDF said they consider the Syrian army responsible for everything that happens in its territory and "will not allow attempts to violate the separation agreement." The Separation of Forces Agreement between Israel and Syria was made on May 31, 1974. This provision aimed to create a buffer zone and prevent any potential clashes.

Early Wednesday, the IDF said that it attacked a number of Hezbollah positions in southern Lebanon and deeper in Lebanon.

It was unclear what military activities Hezbollah undertook against Israel on Wednesday given that the IDF did not report any and Hezbollah's media was focused on a speech by Hezbollah Chief Hassan Nasrallah about ceasefire talks.

But the lack of attention suggested a reduction in attacks.

Also, "A," the head of the Shin Bet's southern region, resigned from his post last Monday, and issued an official announcement of his retirement Wednesday, Walla reported.

He will be replaced by another anonymous individual, who was the head of the Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria division.

NATO

Continued from Page 1

about China's growing activity in the Middle East and its ties with Russia and Iran, particularly with respect to intelligence sharing.

This Russia, Iranian, Chinese sphere presents a danger not just to Israel but to Europe and NATO, sources told *The Jerusalem Post*.

At the summit, Katz spoke with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, and Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen.

He also met with his counterparts from South Korea, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic and Denmark among others.

In a post on X, Katz welcomed the commitment by Denmark and the Netherlands to push for stiffer sanctions against Iran.

After meeting with Dutch

Foreign Minister Caspar Veldkamp, Katz wrote, "Minister Veldkamp announced that the Netherlands will join the initiative to promote a decision in the EU to declare the IRGC a terrorist organization."

After meeting Danish Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen, Katz wrote on X, "I reiterated that Iran poses the greatest threat to the West, and we now have a significant opportunity to build a broad coalition of many countries to increase sanctions against the Iranian regime."

GAZA

Continued from Page 1

As of late Wednesday night, talks were still ongoing.

In Israel, White House Coordinator for the Middle East and North Africa Brett McGurk met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant as well as with National Unity Party head Benny Gantz.

Gallant discussed with McGurk one of the stumbling blocks to the deal, which is the issue of the critical buffer zone between Gaza and Egypt, known as the Philadelphi Corridor.

Hamas had smuggled weapons into Gaza for use against Israel through tunnels it had

dug under that corridor.

An IDF withdrawal from the corridor and indeed from all of Gaza has been one of the group's demands for a hostage and ceasefire deal.

Gallant told McGurk that "A solution is required that will stop smuggling attempts and will cut off potential arms supply to Hamas, and will enable the withdrawal of IDF troops from the corridor, as part of a framework for the release of hostages."

Israel supports the reopening of the crossing between Egypt and Gaza, Gallant said, but stressed that Hamas cannot return to that area.

Egypt so far has refused to reopen that crossing as long as Israel controls it on the Gaza side, as it does now.

Gallant thanked McGurk for his efforts to secure a deal.

Later, at the National Defense College, Gallant said that "a limited window of opportunity had opened up that would allow us to fulfill our moral and ethical duty – to return the hostages."

"The conditions that will be created as a result of the deal will promote our national and security interests," Gallant said.

He stressed that the IDF could defend the country against any risks that might arise as a result of the deal.

The meetings Burns and

McGurk held Wednesday were part of an intense push by the United States to secure an agreement to the three-phase deal US President Joe Biden unveiled on May 31. They are working to put it in place together with the mediating countries of Egypt and Qatar, both of which hosted hostage talks this week.

Hamas initially rejected the agreement, holding fast to its principled position that it would not agree to any deal that did not include a pledge from Israel to end the war and withdraw the IDF from Gaza.

Israel has insisted that any deal must ensure the release of hostages as well as the removal of Hamas from military control and political governance in Gaza. It does not want to commit to a ceasefire until that goal is achieved.

Talks resumed last weekend after Hamas dropped its immediate ceasefire demand, but it has attempted to reinsert it in other ways into the framework agreement.

Netanyahu, earlier this week, published five red lines, including his commitment to a deal that fell within the framework of a Biden proposal.

He listed those conditions, which included prevention of weapons smuggling into Gaza from Egypt, preventing armed terrorists from returning to northern Gaza, maximizing

the release of living hostages, and a commitment to fulfilling Israel's war goals.

Netanyahu emphasized those red lines in his meeting with McGurk, explaining that Israel was committed to the Biden proposal as long as it allowed for those principled points, the Prime Minister's Office said.

Reuters contributed to this report.

BACK

Continued from Page 1

Arbel's recent remarks highlight his willingness to address the contentious problems head-on, even if it means challenging the traditional positions of his party.

Defense Minister Yoav Gallant also said on Wednesday that draft notices would be delivered in the next few weeks to some haredim who had previously been exempt from serving in the military.

The Supreme Court ruled last month that the Defense Ministry must end the longstanding exemption for the ultra-Orthodox.

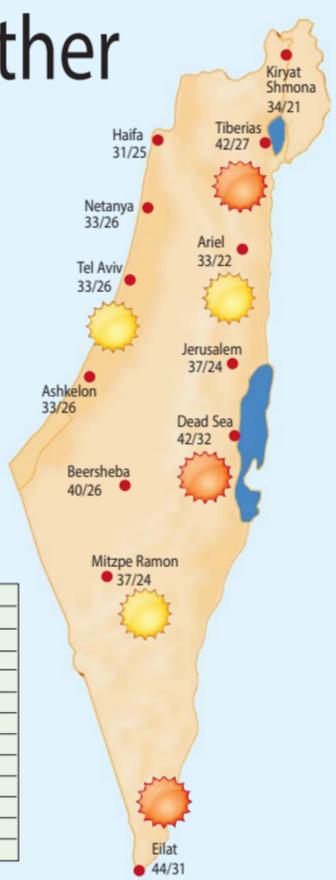
Speaking in the Knesset, Gallant said the plan was to send out thousands of draft notices, though not all given such notices would end up serving.

Reuters and Eliv Breuer contributed to this report.

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Weather

Today	Sunny
Friday	Sunny
Saturday	Unchanged



	Friday
Kiryat Shmona	33/21
Tiberias	41/27
Haifa	31/25
Netanya	33/26
Ariel	33/22
Tel Aviv	33/26
Jerusalem	36/23
Ashkelon	33/26
Dead Sea	42/31
Beersheba	39/24
Mitzpe Ramon	36/22
Eilat	43/29

North America Weather Today



Spain beats France to book place in final

Wonderkid Yamal on target as La Roja rallies past Les Bleus, await winner of England-Netherlands



MUNICH (Reuters) – Spain struck twice in five minutes in a pulsating first half to secure a 2-1 comeback win over France on Tuesday as a record-breaking goal from teenager Lamine Yamal and a Dani Olmo effort propelled them into the Euro 2024 final.

The 16-year-old Yamal canceled out Randal Kolo Muani's opener with a sublime shot in the 21st minute to become the youngest scorer in a Euro or World Cup before Olmo added another in the 25th for his third goal in the knockout stage.

The Spaniards, who have won every game of the tournament so far, confirmed their favorites tag with another display of attacking football, especially in the first half, that is a far cry from the tiki-taka passing game that earned them world and European titles more than a decade ago.

"I'm very happy to have made it to the final," said man-of-the-match Yamal. "Now the most important thing is to win it. We were in a difficult moment, you wouldn't expect a goal so soon."

"I wanted to put it in where it went in, and I'm very happy. I'm happy and content with the victory. I want to win, win and win," added the teenager.

They will now face the winners of Wednesday's match between England and Netherlands in the final in Berlin on Sunday as they hunt a record-breaking fourth European crown.

It was an anti-climactic end to France's tournament, although the 2022 World Cup finalists never lived up to expectations in Germany with a very low conversion rate that carried into the semi-final.

"Spain proved tonight that they are a

very good team. We were fortunate to open the scoring, but they caused us problems because they were superior in terms of control," said France coach Didier Deschamps.

Spain had an early chance when Yamal, the youngest player to feature in a World Cup or Euro semi-final, floated a cross to the far post but Fabian Ruiz headed over the bar.

France did better from an almost identical move in the ninth minute with Kylian Mbappe, playing without a mask after breaking his nose earlier in the tournament, crossing for Kolo Muani to head in their first goal from open play at Euro 2024.

But the Spaniards, who were missing suspended Dani Carvajal and Robin Le Normand as well as injured Pedri, quickly turned the game around.

Yamal curled a stunning left-footed effort from 25 meters in off the post to break another record held by Brazil great Pele, as the youngest scorer in a Euro or World Cup.

Before France had any time to recover Olmo completed their lightning-quick comeback in the 25th with a shot that was deflected in by France's Jules Kounde.

France, who had only conceded one goal in their previous five games in the

tournament, upped the tempo after the break and had chances through Mbappe and Theo Hernandez.

But they could not carve out an equalizer with Spain, pulling back and successfully soaking up the pressure.

Feeble French fail to live up to hype

French fans felt a familiar feeling of gloom on Tuesday while watching their team fall to a semifinal defeat by Spain and exit Euro 2024 with another disappointing performance at a tournament where they arrived as one of the favorites.

Led by a clutch of famous names including captain Kylian Mbappe, France head home having scored their only goal from open play in the tournament in their last game. Mbappe also failed to be a difference maker for his side when he was expected to be the main attraction.

After taking an early lead, France allowed Spain to fight back with two goals in four minutes before the half-hour mark and never really threatened their rivals who were happy to sit on their narrow lead.

Spain manager Luis de la Fuente was criticised after the quarterfinals for being too conservative with a one goal lead against Germany who pounced on a deep-lying Spain with their relentless

KNOCKOUT GLANCE

Round of 16
Switzerland 2, Italy 0
Germany 2, Denmark 0
England 2, Slovakia 1 (AET)
Spain 4, Georgia 1
France 1, Belgium 0
Portugal 0, Slovenia 0 (Portugal 3-0 on PKs)
Netherlands 3, Romania 1
Turkey 2, Austria 1
Quarterfinals
Spain 2, Germany 1 (AET)
France 0, Portugal 0 (France 5-3 on PKs)
England 0 Switzerland 0 (England 5-3 on PKs)
Netherlands 2, Turkey 1
Semifinals
Tuesday
Spain 2, France 1
Wednesday
Netherlands vs England (late)
Final
Sunday
Spain vs England/Netherlands (10 p.m.)
Games on TV on Channel 11 and Sport 1

energy, equalizing after 13 attempts in the second half.

Facing a similar situation against a Spanish team missing three key players through injury and suspension, France showed no urgency to cut the deficit, even after coach Didier Deschamps made four substitutions in the second half.

France offered limited pressing against the Spanish defenders who were content to pass the ball around their own box to run down the clock.

Other than Randal Kolo Muani's header in the ninth minute, France managed only two more shots on target and, even when a goal down, they were unable to produce simple combinations, with their players instead cutting in and firing long-distance shots wildly over the bar six times.

Deschamps' head-scratching decision to leave talisman Antoine Griezmann on the bench also proved costly as France had only won one of the last eight games where he did not start.

It was a fitting end to France's underwhelming campaign in which they scraped through to the semifinals.

On the eve of their loss to Spain, a defiant Deschamps told a press conference that those who thought his side were "boring" should "go watch something else". Now they will.

Who starts, stars for US Olympic men's hoops?

COMMENTARY
• By JEFF ZILLGITT

The starting lineup US men's basketball coach Steve Kerr uses in a pre-Paris Olympics exhibition game against Canada on Wednesday won't be the same lineup he uses in an exhibition game July 15 against Australia.

Same goes for exhibition games against Serbia on July 17, South Sudan on July 20 and Germany on July 22.

And that also might be the case in Olympic games as the US adjusts lineups based on opponents, beginning with its opener against Serbia on July 28. Kerr has options that no other men's basketball Olympic coach has with 12 All-Star caliber players on his roster.

Kerr and his staff – assistant coaches Erik Spoelstra of the Miami Heat, Ty Lue of the Los Angeles Clippers and Mark Few of the Gonzaga Bulldogs – also will use those Olympic tune-up games to explore No. 1 options on a team full of No. 1 options.

When the US needs to score will it be Steph Curry? LeBron James? Kevin Durant? Jayson Tatum? Joel Embiid? Anthony Edwards? The first chance to see what this team looks like was against Canada late Wednesday.

"I'm still the No. 1 option," said Edwards, who starred for a US team that failed to medal at last summer's FIBA World Cup. "You all might look at it differently, I don't look at it differently. Hey, I just go out there and be myself, shoot my shots, play defense. They got to fit in to play around me."

Of course, that's part of Edwards' confidence that makes him one of the NBA's top young stars.

He also said, "Some nights some guys aren't going to get it going. Some nights some guys will. It's going to be different players different nights, and we've got to be OK with that as a group, all 12 of us. We've got to be OK with not having a good night and our teammate having 20



US VICE PRESIDENT Kamala Harris poses for a group picture with LeBron James, Stephen Curry, Anthony Davis, Bam Adebayo, Jrue Holiday and other members of the US men's Olympic basketball team in Las Vegas this week. (Kevin Lamarque/Reuters)

and playing over us. That's the main thing."

No team has a roster with as many NBA stars as the US Seven of the 12 have won NBA titles, all have been All-Stars, seven have won Olympic gold medals, four are NBA MVPs and four were named Finals MVP.

Who are the starters for the US team?

Kerr could pick names out of a hat, and the lineup would work. He takes a more strategic approach and said part of this training camp and the exhibition games is finding the right rotations. His decisions will be analyzed.

What does the starting lineup look like? Steph Curry,

Jayson Tatum, Kevin Durant, LeBron James, and Joel Embiid is a great place to start. Curry, Edwards, Durant, James and Anthony Davis are an appealing group. Jrue Holiday, Devin Booker, Kawhi Leonard, James and Embiid are possible starters. You could go big across all positions with Holiday, Edwards, Leonard, Bam Adebayo and Embiid. Or Davis in place of Adebayo.

"We are purposely going to just throw all kinds of different combinations out there," Kerr said of the exhibition games. "We don't have concerns about who's going to start. It's really about just getting everybody together."

"Everybody understands

this is a very unique situation. They're all not only starters, but future Hall of Famers. So they all deserve to start there. Only five can. We'll figure it out."

The possibilities aren't endless. But they are abundant and intriguing as this group has the ability to play any style and match up with any opponent.

This team will receive comparisons to the 2008 Redeem Team and 2012 London Olympics squad. Based on NBA accomplishments and awards, this 2024 team stacks up.

Ultimately, this team may not have a clear No. 1 option when a bucket is necessary. As Edwards pointed out, it could be a different player based on circumstances of opponent and what is needed. Maybe they need a Curry 3 or for James to create for himself or a teammate or Durant just to get a bucket or Embiid to overpower a defender in the low post.

"I love that Anthony Edwards said he's the No. 1 option the other day. I want him to think that way, and I want five, six other guys to feel that way too," Kerr said.

"They don't want to disappoint one another. They want to make sure they're bringing their best energy, best game to the floor every night for their teammates."

Edwards knows he won't be the No. 1 option, and he might not even be on the court in close late-game situations. He has a player in mind who fits the role.

"When the game is on the line, who's going to be the Alpha? I think Kevin Durant," Edwards said. "He better be. That's who I came to see."

The US has the talent where it doesn't need the same guy to be the guy each game. "That's the beauty of being on this team," Kerr said. "These guys, they're all capable of taking over a game and I think as they go, they realize that mentality, that aggressiveness is actually a good thing because they're all committed to each other."

(USA Today/TNS)

Djokovic in semis after de Minaur WDs; Rybakina, Krejckikova win



LONDON (Reuters) – Novak Djokovic advanced into his record-tying 13th semifinal Wimbledon after Alex de Minaur of Australia withdrew due to a hip injury on Wednesday.

Scheduled to face Djokovic on the quarterfinals, de Minaur admitted that he injured his hip in the closing stages of his 6-2, 6-4, 4-6, 6-3 win over Arthur Fils in the fourth round on Monday. After attempting to warm up for less than eight minutes early in the day, de Minaur notified Wimbledon officials and Djokovic's camp he would be unable to recover in time to challenge the second-seeded Djokovic.

"I'm devastated, but I had to pull out due to a hip injury, a little tear of the fiber cartilage that is at the end to the adductor," de Minaur said. "I felt a loud crack during the last three points of my match against Fils and got a scan yesterday and it confirms that this was the injury. There is a high risk of making it worse if I was to step on court."

With the win, Djokovic is tied with Roger Federer for the most Wimbledon semifinal appearances by a man in tournament history. The 37-year-old Djokovic will square off against the winner of Wednesday's late match, 13th-seeded Taylor Fritz versus 25th-seeded Lorenzo Musetti of Italy.

As for de Minaur, he said he was at peace with his decision despite the chance to defeat Djokovic for the second time this year.

"It's no secret that, at this stage of my career, this was the biggest match of my career. So wanted to do anything I could to play," de Minaur said. "I got the results yesterday. I knew what the results were yesterday. I still wanted to wake up today hoping that I would feel some sort of miracle and not feel it while I'm walking."

"The problem with me going out and playing is that one stretch, one slide, one anything, can make this injury recovery go from three to six weeks to four months," de Minaur said. "It's too much to risk."

On the women's side, no. 4 seed Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan cruised into the semifinals with a 6-3, 6-2 victory over No. 21 Elina Svitolina of Ukraine.

Rybakina, the 2022 Wimbledon champion, recorded 28 winners and converted four of six break opportunities in the breezy 61-minute win at the All England Club.

With nearly as many aces (seven) as Svitolina had winners (eight), Rybakina won 85 percent of the points on her first serve (22 of 26) and was broken only once.

"It's always tough to play Elina," Rybakina said. "She's a great player and fighter. No matter the score, it was not as easy as it might look like."

Rybakina improved to 19-2 in the main draw at the grass-court Grand Slam. Her 90.4 percent win rate ranks third in the Open Era (since 1968) at Wimbledon behind Ann Jones (12-1, 92.3 percent) and Steffi Graf (74-7, 91.4 percent).

The 25-year-old Rybakina

will attempt to improve on that sterling record in Thursday's semifinals against 2021 French Open champion Barbora Krejckikova of the Czech Republic.

The 31st-seeded Krejckikova rallied from 4-1 down in the second set in Wednesday's quarterfinals to defeat No. 13 Jelena Ostapenko of Latvia 6-4, 7-6 (4) in 1 hour and 40 minutes.

Krejckikova, 28, reached her first Wimbledon semifinal on the strength of her service game, winning 81 percent of the points on her first serve (38 of 47) including five aces.

Krejckikova finished with nearly twice as many unforced errors as winners (27-15), but Ostapenko finished with 35 unforced errors and 16 winners. Ostapenko, who had lost only 15 games to reach the final eight, also double-faulted five times.

Earlier this year, Krejckikova missed time with a serious illness.

"It was a very difficult period," she said. "It was actually super difficult even before this tournament. I want to thank my boys and my team that's there today. There have been many doubts from inside but also from the outside world."

"I'm super happy I never gave up and that I'm standing here right now and that I've reached the semifinals." Krejckikova has won both previous meetings with Rybakina. This will be their first meeting on grass.

No. 7 seed Jasmine Paolini of Italy and unseeded Donna Vekic of Croatia meet in the other semifinal. Paolini holds a 2-1 head-to-head lead over Vekic.

On TV: Wimbledon late-round coverage (live on Sports channels from 1 p.m.)

COMMENT & FEATURES

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Made in Iran

At the end of May, a month when anti-Israel and often antisemitic demonstrations roiled US college campuses, Iran's leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei penned a letter expressing support for the protests.

Khamenei commended the students for being on "the right side of history," for their "noble resistance" against US support for Israel, and for having established "a branch of the Resistance Front" against the Jewish state.

Considering that Avril Haines, the US Director of National Intelligence, said on Monday that in recent weeks "Iranian government actors have sought to opportunistically take advantage of ongoing protests regarding the war in Gaza, using a playbook we've seen other actors use over the years," Khamenei's words take on new meaning. Khamenei was essentially praising the fruits of his own handiwork.

"We have observed actors tied to Iran's government posing as activists online, seeking to encourage protests, and even providing financial support," Haines said.

She added that the intelligence did not indicate that Americans who participate in the protests are not "in good faith, expressing their views on the conflict in Gaza." But, she warned, "it is also important to warn of foreign actors who seek to exploit our debate for their own purposes."

Ironically, her words came just a day after Vice President Kamala Harris said in an interview with progressive *The Nation* magazine that the protesters "are showing exactly what the human emotion should be, as a response to Gaza."

Harris added, "There are things some of the protesters are saying that I absolutely reject, so I don't mean to wholesale endorse their points. But we have to navigate it. I understand the emotion behind it."

But if Haines's information is correct, some of that emotion is being fueled by a country that hates American democracy but wants to exploit it for its own purposes, and that seeks to destroy Israel.

There have been persistent rumors since the protests began that Iran and other governments were involved – some fingers pointed at Russia and China, and at Qatar and Saudi Arabia – to either foment civil unrest in the US, or weaken US-Israel ties.

Haines's comments were a first high-level confirmation that Tehran has a hand in this pernicious game.

And it is pernicious on several different levels. First, by stoking discord, Iran seeks to deepen existing fault lines in American society and exploit domestic tensions to further polarize an already badly polarized society, potentially leading to greater social unrest.

This is something that could transpire at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago next month, where there already is concern that this high-profile stage will be exploited by anti-Israel, pro-Hamas demonstrators to create havoc on the streets that will be seen and heard around the world.

Second, this move is destructive because it undermines the public's trust and faith in grassroots democratic movements. A democracy's integrity rests on the free and fair expression of public opinion. When a foreign government covertly intervenes in domestic protests, it compromises that principle and breeds skepticism of the protest's legitimacy and authenticity as well as of the policy decisions influenced by those protests.

Thirdly, foreign interference in domestic affairs poses a real threat to US sovereignty since it involves covert operations to manipulate internal political dynamics. What is even scarier is that some of those being manipulated do not even realize they are being used as stooges to serve another country's malign interests.

And, finally, this could have negative ramifications for Israel-US ties. If the assessments are accurate, Iran was involved in sowing anti-Israel sentiment on US campuses and in streets that featured in mainstream media, creating a perception that America was moving away from Israel. That very perception – if it takes hold – could impact the decisions of policymakers who are heavily influenced by what they perceive as the public's mood.

We must hope that with Haines's revelation, both US policymakers and the public will be more wary and see anti-Israel protests for what many of them are – a vehicle used by foreign interests to sow disunity inside America and drive a wedge between Israel and the Jewish state.

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Palestinian 'pacifism'

The Quakerly AFSC

• By ASAF ROMIROWSKY

The American Friends Service Committee has been at the forefront of the Israel boycott movement for decades. Nothing, including the terrible Hamas massacre of October 7, has changed their stance.

In a recent interview, the current head of the AFSC, Joyce Ajlouny, gave a long diatribe about her recent visit to the region and to share her post-October 7 narrative. Prior to becoming the committee's director, she served for 13 years as director of the Ramallah Friends School, a hotbed of Arab nationalism and opposition to Zionism. The Ramallah School has also become a feeder to Quaker schools in the US, especially in Pennsylvania.

It was no surprise that Ajlouny's story was filled with Holocaust inversion, slogans accusing Israel of apartheid and genocide, and highlighting her work with the "good Jews" from Jewish Voices for Peace (JVP) and IfNotNow (INN).

Above all, her narrative minimized the events of October 7 but with a sense of Schadenfreude, deflecting all facts regarding the barbaric Hamas attack and Israel's response with attempts to rationalize the terrorist group's behavior as being justified by the *nakba* (catastrophe of 1948) and the "occupation."

"I think people don't understand that this is not an Oct. 7 start date for this occupation and this apartheid system," she said. "I've lived through it all my life as a child. Where do I begin to explain the ins and outs of what it means to be under the military control of a belligerent, settler-colonial system that wants to ethnically cleanse me from the land? I believe that that is what's happening. It's really about that. It's a continuation of that."



JEWISH VOICE For Peace members and supporters hold a rally outside the Zeckelman Memorial Holocaust Museum in December in Farmington Hills, Michigan. The AFSC endorses JVP, which calls for the end of the Zionist enterprise, says the writer. (Rebecca Cook/Reuters)

The root cause, in Ajlouny's view, is Israel, which got what it deserved on October 7.

The AFSC has long used Quaker pacifism as a fig leaf, as it transformed itself into a full-fledged advocate for the Palestinian cause at the helm of the boycott movement against Israel. Palestinianism forms a central pillar of Quakerism today, as well as for a broad swath of American Jews unwittingly influenced by 20th century Reform leader Judah Magnes' unique Quakerly Judaism. Palestinians have acquired a curiously sanctified place, and their violence is tolerated, explained and even justified by pacifists.

Historically, with the rise of Nazism, the committee became involved with what would become the greatest refugee crisis in history. That experience demonstrated the organization's approach to religious diplomacy and relief efforts, where naïve idealism coexisted

with practicality.

For example, during the 1930s, the Friends network in Germany, including Quaker Student Clubs, gave the AFSC in Philadelphia an unusually clear view of the nature of the regime and the growing persecution of Jews. Shortly after Kristallnacht in November 1938, committee co-founder Rufus Jones and two other leading Quakers traveled to Germany to personally investigate the suffering of the Jews.

There they pled the case with representatives of the Reich Security Main Office and Reichsführer-SS Reinhard Heydrich for Quakers to be permitted to investigate the condition of Jews and bring relief aid. In a written statement, Jones stressed that they had aided Germans in the past, were completely non-political and non-judgmental, and had only come "to support and save life and suffer with those who are suffering." The AFSC's under-

standing of Hamas' contemporary evil is even less useful.

Quaker attitudes towards Jews during the mid-1940s, ostensibly supportive, were in fact abstract and bordered on antisemitism. The organization took a leading role in providing aid to Arab refugees in Gaza after 1948.

But the lack of "Quakerly values" among Israelis with whom they interacted on a political basis, or their own employees like future professor Don Peretz, deemed "too Zionist" (in addition to being Jewish), reflects an almost theological confrontation between abstract beliefs and expectations and complex realities. Peretz's troubled relationship with the AFSC underscores the organization's abandonment of pacifism; even leaving Jews like Peretz – a conscientious objector during World War II – were not "Quakerly" enough given their Jewishness.

TODAY, the AFSC has gone

even further by embracing BDS and will only deal with far Left Jews like those in the Jewish Voice for Peace who call for the end of the Zionist enterprise. So strong is JVP's antipathy to Israel that even the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) has called it "the largest and most influential Jewish anti-Zionist group" in the US.

Notwithstanding all the evidence of barbarism, savagery and sexual abuse on October 7, Ajlouny and the group she heads regard their support for the BDS movement and the Palestinian narrative as just and righteous. As the committee puts it, its advocacy of BDS is "contextualized by Quakers and AFSC's long support for boycotts, divestment and sanctions as economic tactics that appeal to human conscience and change behavior," thereby situating its campaigns against Israel alongside its opposition to slavery, segregation, apartheid and other reprehensible phenomena.

In doing so, however, the AFSC aligns itself with Hamas, accepting and justifying violence even as it touts "nonviolent efforts to realize peace and justice in Israel and Palestine." Ajlouny says that what "people don't realize is... the day-in-and-out of our lives, the daily humiliation that I remember as a child, and as leading a school there, seeing how brutal the occupation is. And the trauma, the collective trauma that has caused for generations."

All of the above highlights the contradictions and brings the AFSC closer to full-fledged endorsement of Hamas. However tragic that would be, it would have the advantage of honesty.

The writer is the executive director of *Scholars for Peace in the Middle East (SPME)* and the *Association for the Study of the Middle East and Africa (ASMEA)*.

Normalization is a golden opportunity

• By YOEL GUZANSKY and UDI DEKEL

Notwithstanding the ongoing war between Israel and Hamas, and perhaps even because of it, diplomatic contacts aimed at advancing a normalization agreement between Israel and Saudi Arabia have continued. The fundamental motivation of the United States and Saudi Arabia in this context has not changed since before October 7.

Normalization will lead to the establishment of a regional security alliance and the reversal of the negative strategic trends for Israel since October 7. The moderate alliance will stand up against Iran and the resistance camp and open the door to Palestinian Authority participation, while establishing a governing alternative to Hamas in the Gaza Strip and renewing a political process in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict arena.

The United States wants to forge a new regional order, which will make it easier for itself and for Middle Eastern nations to deal with Iran – and also to indicate that it is not abandoning the region. Riyadh wants to cement its regional standing and bolster its status and security, particularly vis-à-vis Iran, by strengthening its ties and a defense alliance with Washington.

Moreover, the war that has been raging since October 7 on several fronts has made it clear to the Saudi royal family that the Palestinian problem is not secondary, cannot be contained, and cannot be ignored. Therefore, Saudi Arabia wants to distance itself from being identified with Israel as long as the war in Gaza continues and



US SECRETARY of State Antony Blinken meets with foreign ministers from the Organization for Islamic Cooperation and the Arab League to discuss the future of Gaza, in Washington last December. The US wants to forge a new regional order, say the writers. (Evelyn Hockstein/Reuters)

it is showing solidarity with the Palestinians. Accordingly, the kingdom has increased the price that it is demanding from Israel in terms of commitment, accompanied by practical measures, to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict within the framework of the two-state reality.

One consequence of the conflict is that the "price of normalization" for Israel vis-à-vis the Palestinian issue has increased, and the Israeli government is refusing to pay it. Saudi Arabia is now expected to be involved in the Palestinian arena and also to support the stabilization and reconstruction of the Gaza Strip, as well as deal with the increasingly hostile public opinion toward Israel in the Arab street since the outbreak of the war. More than 90% of its citizens object to normalization with Israel. The result is that the gaps between the policies of the regimes and the views of their people are widening.

Even if the Arab states' motivation for peace with Israel remains unchanged, the cost-benefit considerations of these regimes are shifting. From their perspective, Israel has not been able to crush Hamas, whom they despise, and the scenes of death and destruction from the Gaza Strip are a threat to public order in their own countries. They also fear that the conflict could escalate into a larger regional war involving Iran and its proxies.

However, Saudi Arabia – like other pragmatic countries – is hesitant to get directly involved in promoting an arrangement that would end the war in Gaza and potentially require active participation, such as being part of a pan-Arab task force there.

Relations between the United States and Saudi Arabia are growing closer to the extent that they may be able to strengthen their partnership while reducing the focus on Saudi-Israeli normalization.

Dropping the "burden" of normalization from the kingdom would be the ideal scenario for Riyadh, allowing the Saudis to benefit from America without facing the public opinion backlash that comes with normalization with Israel.

However, it does seem that Saudi Arabia is coordinating with the United States and will keep the door open to normalization, as senior members of the Saudi royal family have publicly stated.

If Washington and Riyadh strengthen their relations without including an element of normalization, this would be the worst of all worlds for Israel's interests. Jerusalem would miss a possible opportunity for normalization with the Arab-Muslim world, establishing a regional security alliance, and the potential strategic advantage that comes with them while paying a heavy price due to Saudi Arabia's strategic benefits from the United States. Israeli leaders should rec-

ognize the strategic cost of not engaging with US and Saudi proposals, including the Palestinian package and opening a window to the Israeli-Palestinian political process.

On the other hand, participating in normalization and being part of a regional security alliance would be a powerful response to Hamas and Iran, both of which have attempted to undermine the process of reconciliation between Israel and the Arab world. Furthermore, normalization would facilitate an agreement to end the conflict with active Arab involvement in stabilizing and rebuilding the Gaza Strip, even if the renewed Palestinian Authority was involved.

A normalization agreement between Israel and Saudi Arabia would bring economic benefits, enhance Israel's legitimacy in the Arab and Muslim worlds, strengthen America's position in the region, and bolster Saudi Arabia's political and military strength as a counterweight to Iran.

The bottom line is that Israel needs to answer Saudi concerns and seize this golden – and possibly unique – opportunity by pursuing an end-state to the war. This includes striking a deal to release the hostages, taking the veto power from Hamas so that it cannot torpedo a positive process in the Palestinian arena, establishing a "renewed" and moderate Palestinian regime to control a demilitarized Gaza Strip while maintaining military freedom for the IDF, and defining a diplomatic horizon for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The writers are senior fellows at the *Institute for National Security Studies (INSS)* at Tel Aviv University.

Mixed voices from Washington

• By ZALMAN SHOVAL

The recent annual Herzliya Conference, dealing with different challenges facing Israel, included, like every year, a session on US-Israel relations. One of the headings, in free translation, was "Israel without the US – is it possible?"

Anyone familiar even to the slightest degree with political realities would not hesitate to answer in the negative or, at the very least, to acknowledge that the relationship is of vital importance. They might also add qualifications pertaining not only to the Israeli half of the question but also to questions regarding America, which can be expected to multiply in the wake of the recent presidential debate and the ensuing political turmoil. The United States also has important strategic and other interests in Israel, but to keep things in proportion, the vectors are not equal.

This does not mean that the relationship will always be harmonious. There have been and will always be disagreements resulting from the simple fact that a country has interests of its own that do not necessarily match even those of a close ally. So, the rule for Israeli diplomacy, established by the late Moshe Dayan, still holds: risk a confrontation, if at all, only on absolutely essential issues.

Regardless of its merits, the not-yet-resolved dispute about the supply of vital arms and munitions to Israel, which is facing a war on several fronts, could be a case in point. If the US administration was looking for a pretext to cancel the planned strategic meetings with Israel regarding Iran, the above dispute played into its hands.



US DEFENSE SECRETARY Lloyd Austin receives Defense Minister Yoav Gallant at the Pentagon last month. Israel without the US – is it possible? Anyone familiar with political realities will not hesitate to answer in the negative, says the writer. (Kevin Lamarque/Reuters)

However, it would be shortsighted for Israel to ignore the changes that are currently taking place in the US in a whole range of issues – political, social, cultural, etc. – that have already affected and could further affect America's position in the world and its foreign relations, including those with Israel.

More than a few questions arise in this respect: Has America given up on its role as the world's leading superpower and leader of the free world? Have America's values, which played a significant role in its international relations and, in particular, with Israel, turned

hollow? What about its judicial system, which both the American Left and Right accuse of being biased and corrupt? What will the effect of the demographic changes in American society be on Israel and American Jews, and what about the rising antisemitism on both the Right and the Left? While the antisemitism of the Right, which is not new and often violent, is haphazard, antisemitism on the extreme Left is well organized, as in the protests on campuses, using official political institutions, including the US Congress, and exploiting the liberties granted by the American Con-

stitution for its own purposes.

As is usually the case, the two extremes eventually meet. According to some assessments, the anti-Israel and broadly antisemitic Squad is shrinking, but the test of this will come only in November.

Last but not least, what will be the shape and character of America, for better or for worse, four months from now, after the elections in November? Whatever the results, fissures, and divisions in American society and politics will only deepen.

In both major parties and among American voters in general, there are isolationist

tendencies that, on the Republican side, are creating growing reservations about aid to Ukraine and foreign aid in general, and, among the "progressives" in the Democratic Party, are fueling opposition to President Biden's policy regarding Israel in general and the Gaza war in particular, with security-related assistance to Israel at the top of their blacklist.

THIS IS not just a theoretical issue. According to some reports, there have been actual cases of covert and even overt obstructions – among senior-level officials in the State Department and other depart-

ments – of the administration's Middle East policies, which, they say, contradict America's basic interests. A detailed programmatic article in this respect was published this month in *Foreign Affairs* by Ben Rhodes, a senior official in the Obama administration who now plays the role of an oracle on American foreign policy.

Rhodes is not a close associate of Biden, but his views may have an impact on those of the Democratic Party in the future – whether it continues to govern or finds itself in the next four years outside the White House or loses control of both chambers of Congress.

In his article, Rhodes calls for establishing a foreign policy for the world "as it is," that is, not the one "wrongly imagined." In previous times, some of his views on what he considers necessary political realism would have been termed "appeasement." In his opinion, America must come to terms with the fact that the world no longer recognizes its uniqueness and primacy and that it must therefore give up "its mysterious political phenomena," an apparent reference to, in his view harmful political influence on foreign policy.

Though he recognizes Russia's and China's aim to reset the norms of the world in their image, he calls for abandoning America's traditional positions and instead "to build bridges to the future and not to the past (without specifying)," emphasizing what he defines as America's continuous failures towards a large part of the earth's population, "especially in the southern part." Rhodes, who was part of the team negotiating Obama's nuclear agreement, makes almost no reference to the growing threat of Iran and confines himself to

general terms on this matter.

As might have been expected, a significant part of Rhodes's criticism (like that of some other figures who take their Jewishness as a license to criticize not only Israeli policy but also pro-Israel decisions by the US) deals with Israel and its current war. "To many in the world," he writes, "it seems that the lives of Palestinian children are not as important to Washington as the lives of Israelis. Unconditional military aid to Israel, ignoring the death toll on the Palestinian side, opposition to Security Council resolutions calling for a cessation of hostilities, American criticism of Israel's war crimes investigations, etc., present America as cynical and one-sided."

As usual in these circles, as well as among the Israeli Left, Rhodes expresses the hope that "Gaza will cause a shock that will disconnect Washington from the 'muscle memories' that guide too many of its actions." Regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Rhodes repeats the usual mantras for "an effort to promote a new Palestinian leadership and recognize a Palestinian state."

Though not going as far as Senators Sanders, Warren, and some other members of Congress in altogether opposing military aid to Israel, like the Israeli Left, he does not address the real causes of the conflict. As the late Israeli prime minister Ben-Gurion had said, "Peace will come when the Arabs also want it" and none other than Biden added last year that it will come "when Israel's neighbors recognize the right of the Jewish people to their own state." Both were right.

The writer, a former MK, served as ambassador to the US from 1990 to 1993 and from 1998 to 2000.

Netanyahu's challenge in Congress

• By AVINOAM BAR-YOSEF

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's planned speech this month to the United States Congress poses complex challenges to Israel – not only to the Biden administration, not only to Donald Trump, and not only to the West, which is exposed to violent antisemitic demonstrations organized by Hamas.

The speech poses a serious challenge to the US Jewish community. American Jewry opposes Israeli interference in US internal affairs. October 7 did not pass them by. The tragedy in the villages around Gaza and the war that followed have deepened the crisis in the community, a crisis that may affect the identity and identification of the young Jewish generation in North America.

An article published by Ehud Barak, Tamir Pardo, and company in *The New York Times* was not aimed at Diaspora Jews. It focused on the political identity of Israeli Jews. The authors fear that a good speech will strengthen Netanyahu, and therefore, they demand that Congress cancel the invitation.

My decision to address this issue was influenced by several completely different factors. It started when I read Avi Gil's new book, *Where is the Head?* (published by Steimatzky). It is an engrossing, apparently fictional thriller that creates a surprising framework for a thought-provoking plot regarding Jewish affinity.

Gil, a former director-general of the Foreign Ministry, is a top Israeli diplomat. I was honored when, after retiring from public service, he agreed to join the founding team of the Jewish People Policy Institute (JPPI). To this day, he continues to contribute significantly in the field of geopolitical analysis and policy planning. Recently, he has been "sinning" in writing fiction. His third book – a fascinating read that Hebrew readers should not miss – recounts the adventures of a



A PRO-PALESTINIAN protest is held outside the White House last month. When Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addresses Congress, hundreds of thousands of Hamas supporters are expected to chant outside, "Palestine from the river to the sea." (Tom Brenner/Reuters)

unique action team formed to produce a dramatic move in order to curb the loss of unity in Israel and the Diaspora.

The Study of Global Antisemitism (ISGAP) turned on a non-fictional warning light when it discovered that the Bafrayung Fund, headed by Rachel Gelman, is among the main donors to the Westchester Peace Action Committee (WESPAC), which supported anti-Israeli groups and Hamas-inspired demonstrations on campuses all over the United States. I do not know Rachel Gelman personally, but I know her parents well.

Suzy and Michael Gelman are prominent leaders and major philanthropists in the North American Jewish Federations system. They chaired the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington for three terms, are active on the board of trustees of the Jewish Agency, and were

among the founders of Birthright (Taglit). I am familiar with their warm Zionist affinity as their liberal worldview. Their perceptions are typical of many North American Jews attached to Judaism and the Jewish state.

As I understand it, Suzy and Michael have established a philanthropic foundation with which their children can do whatever their hearts desire. The apple turns out to have fallen as far from the tree as a golf ball flying out of bounds.

However, the wake-up call came from a friend who has dedicated most of his life to the prosperity of the Jewish community of New York. He excitedly told me that there are Jewish leaders who are encouraging members of Congress to leave the hall during Netanyahu's speech. They are asking them to leave and join the demonstrations against him outside the Capitol.

"When Israel wobbles, all

of Judaism trembles," said my friend, "Many American Jews fear Trump and worry that Netanyahu will play into the Republicans' hands. They hate Israeli meddling in American politics, even if they admit that the US administration does not hesitate to step into the Israeli political arena. The USA is a superpower. Not everything that the administration allows itself is also allowed for an Israeli politician."

During the speech, hundreds of thousands of Hamas supporters are expected to demonstrate outside the Capitol, chanting, "Palestine from the river to the sea." It will not be a rose garden. Leaders of major American Jewish organizations say that Jews who intend to join the demonstrations and encourage a democratic absence are a handful of identified activists of the progressive Jewish lobby, J-Street. They draw inspiration from and

are helped by a handful of Israelis. *The New York Times* article revealed their identities.

Israel's supporters do not believe that many Jews will join the Hamas call of "Palestine from the river to the sea." Those who arrive will be swallowed up in the crowd. They take solace in the fact that even in 2015, during Netanyahu's speech in Congress, about 60 Democratic delegates abandoned the plenary in protest. In their estimation, the picture will be similar in 2024. The leadership of both parties signed the invitation to Netanyahu, so a significant democratic presence is expected.

For decades, American Jews have provided Israel with a safety net. They have largely become a strategic asset. World War II gave birth to a deep frustration that stemmed from their powerlessness to help their brothers in Europe, who were led

like sheep to the gas chambers. After the war, they came to their senses and organized themselves.

On the eve of the Six Day War, Levi Eshkol sought to characterize the State of Israel, which had not yet turned 20 as *Shimshun der nebechdikehr* – a poor Samson. It was a young country facing an existential threat, strong in spirit, determined to exist, and ready to fight against enemies who sought its extermination.

The Jews of the world stood by the Jewish state as one. They came to volunteer in kibbutzim and moshavim to free up the reservists from their burdens of daily life. The power of the Jewish community in the United States gained momentum after the Six Day War.

The unequivocal victory of the IDF against Egypt, Jordan, and Syria added to their national pride. Their strengthened position in American society, political and economic, added to their power and influence. The Jews, who had been excluded from leading universities, private country clubs, hotels, and resorts reserved for WASPs, became increasingly welcome. The success of the State of Israel also contributed decisively to this transformation.

Talented young Jews were absorbed in public service, politics, the media, and academia. The same WASPs who moments earlier had opposed the reception of Jews in their clubs began to take pride in brides and grooms of Jewish origin. Many of them, including American presidents, became grandparents to Jewish grandchildren.

This success worked in favor of Israel. During the Yom Kippur War, when Israel was undergoing one of its most difficult times, then-secretary of state and national security adviser Henry Kissinger had a decisive influence on the American airlift sent to Israel, which changed the battlefield's configuration. In the early 1990s, China, countries that had broken

free from the Soviet bloc, and a significant number of Third World countries established relations with Israel because they believed that the road to Washington passes through Jerusalem. This was despite the fact that the White House at the time acted against the reelection of Yitzhak Shamir, who was considered a right-wing, nationalist, and rigid Israeli leader.

This was mainly thanks to the unity of the Jewish people, thanks to the prosperity of the Jewish community in the United States and its visionary leadership, headed by the iconic Max Fisher, and thanks to a thriving Israel. Jews who occupied senior positions in the government were able to identify not only the common values, but also the tangential interests between the two countries, and strengthen their relations.

October 7 devoured the cards. Israel's position as a regional power is eroding. The rift, the demonstrations in Israel, the shuffling on the battlefield, and the rise of antisemitism are damaging.

Netanyahu must take advantage of the opportunity in Congress to strengthen the unity of the Jewish people. To recall the apples that have fallen far from the tree back to the roots. To tiptoe smartly between Biden and Trump. To make it clear to the Americans and the free world that even though the Israeli Samson had a haircut on October 7, he is not a *nebish*; that the Israeli soldiers fight bravely, and the IDF stands resolutely at the head of the Western Front, against the radical axis of evil led by Iran, Russia, China, and North Korea.

As for the critics at home: they should become a little more patient and shoulder more responsibility if the Jewish State is still dear to them.

The writer is president emeritus of the Jewish People's Policy Institute (JPPI) and a former diplomatic correspondent and Maariv bureau chief in Washington.

The mother of all depravity

Sending Gazan children off to fight and die

• By COOKIE SCHWAEBER-ISSAN

They say that the lioness is the most protective of her newborn cubs, more than any other mother within the animal kingdom. The inseparable bond created by mother and child is a wonder of nature, and not just one that is exclusive to the wild but also extends to human beings.

It is the reason why there is absolutely no explanation for Gazan youth who, according to reports, have been recruited, by the thousands, to be trained by Hamas operatives to shoot at the IDF. These “training camps” for new recruits are intended to replace the 14,000-16,000 of its fighters who the IDF has killed.

Nothing could be a more beneficial photo op than Gazan youth losing their lives on the battlefield, fueling ultimate outrage, as they're pitted against Israel's military might. It is these kids, who have barely lived their lives, never knowing the joys of marriage, family and personal accomplishments, who are the expendable props to Hamas, serving public relations' purposes of a war which depends upon world opinion which swiftly judges out of context.

And while all of this is predictable, given what we know about the Hamas death cult, driven by the intense hatred that they are indoctrinated with from birth, none of this is consistent with the natural

role of motherhood – an innate connection, intrinsically present between a woman and her offspring, resulting in an unbreakable bond between the two, even from the moment of conception.

The biological phenomenon is both physical and emotional, based on the production of hormones, which occurs during childbirth, but later develops into the specific sounds, reactions and other stimuli that are part of the childrearing process. Obviously, breastfeeding plays a great role in this immutable attachment.

Given all of these factors, there remains no reasonable explanation as to how mothers of Gazan youth willingly send their sons out to die, often with great pride, to the point of claiming that “it is a mother's most glorious duty for their children to kill themselves for Palestine.”

THIS DIABOLICAL and distorted position flies in the face of all we know about the maternal instinct, which is God-given and part of the female make-up, when it comes to protecting their young. It is a deviant behavior, which is neither natural, typical nor acceptable, because it defies all levels of sentiment which are part and parcel of every mother who has emotionally invested herself to the fullest, as she nurtures the child whom she sees as an extension of herself.

There is no doubt that Hamas



YOUNG PALESTINIANS shout slogans during a military-style exercise at the Liberation Youths summer camp organized by Hamas, in Rafah, 2015. (Nothing could be a more beneficial photo op than Gazan youth losing their lives on the battlefield. (Ibraheem Abu Mustafa/Reuters))

terrorists are able to grab these children from the comfort of their families, in order to train them for war, in a battle where their chances of instant death are almost 100%, only because their mothers are willing accomplices.

Of course, it goes without saying that their fathers are no less guilty of offering up their children on the altar of sacrifice, having no qualms in their knowledge that their own family line will be discontinued, at least with these offspring.

Yet, in most cases, the bond

of a father is still not as tight and unbreakable as the one between a child and his mother (daughters also, of course, but they do not become warriors, unlike their Israeli counterparts who do).

Either way, Hamas has used this apathy and careless disregard of Gazan parents to replenish their ever-depleting numbers, knowing that it's a win-win situation: because if the child warrior is not instantly killed, he lives to fight another day, but if he is killed, the photo op is worth more to

them than gold. After all, it's another nail in the coffin that world opinion prepares for the Jewish state, which is always blamed for the suffering of children and “innocent civilians.”

What is missing from this deplorable picture is the full context of what is happening. Mothers and fathers are fully complicit in sending out their children to die for a cause which is rooted in hatred, terror and evil – three of the most important things against which every parent should guard their progeny.

The fact that mothers, especially, can't understand the odds facing their kids – or, in this case, don't even care about the likelihood of their deaths – is a shameful and disgraceful commentary on them as clearly not possessing the most basic human characteristics of reason, logic, feeling and caring.

WHEN YOU listen to an interview, where the wife of a Hamas operative unashamedly says that she and her husband, as well as their children, all pray that Allah would grant them martyrdom, it makes you wonder: What are they living for? It's certainly not for any hopeful future that will bring these families pride, joy and a sense of accomplishment. On the contrary – they are essentially giving up on a future with grandchildren and a fulfilling end.

These mothers have literally been programmed to accept death as a blessing, another shocking anomaly from the way normal people respond to the loss of a beloved family member. It is this total, extreme departure of human values that must be completely rejected by any individual who claims to be part of a race of people who strive to possess higher ethics than those of savage animals.

There is no question that once parents begin to value the lives of the children who came from their own loins, terrorists such as Hamas will no longer be able to exploit the people for

whom they say they are championing.

But not only is it incumbent upon these Gazan families to reject the call for their children to become casualties in an unwinnable war, but it is also the responsibility of people throughout the world to view these events as the human tragedy of our day, rivaling the biblical account of parents who offered up their children to the Canaanite god Molech, a truly homicidal act.

For how can humanity, which claims to grieve over senseless death, close its eyes to the heartless acts of parents, without whose approval the death of their children would not occur? To ignore their complicity is to excuse parents and terrorists for the wholesale murder of their children, making society a willing participant in the deplorable crimes that are being committed against an entire generation of kids, who will never have the chances they could have. It is the height of hypocrisy and must be emphasized to the fullest.

Until world outcry can be heard for these sacrificial lambs, there is nothing the world can offer by way of honest judgment or placing the guilt on whom it rightly belongs.

The writer is a former Jerusalem elementary and middle school principal. She is the author of *Mistake-Proof Parenting, available on Amazon, based on the time-tested wisdom found in the Book of Proverbs.*

A time for answers



WASHINGTON WATCH
• By DOUGLAS BLOOMFIELD

Far too often, politics has been about the players and not the larger game.

That is painfully clear in this year's presidential election. An intense spotlight is being focused on Joe Biden's dismal debate performance and his physical stamina while virtually ignoring his record and that of his opponent.

Donald Trump got a virtual free pass on the debate despite his gusher of lies, racism, accusations and stumbles. That is not unexpected since that's his usual behavior and the moderators and media seemed afraid or not to care.

I'm not saying it is wrong to raise questions about whether Biden's age is an impairment. Both candidates are the oldest ever to run for president. Both of them in fact are the oldest two ever elected to the job.

It might be in the national interest to subject both men to cognitive and physical exams by respected and unbiased professionals not of their own choosing with the results made public.

But until then, it is time for the media to examine itself and its double standard. The laser-like focus has been on Biden's physicality, with almost nothing being said about Trump's mental fitness.

Trump may see the media as his permanent enemy but in reality they are his greatest ally. He is a skilled performer and his rage and rants at his rallies have been rewarded with more airtime and ink than his opponents, and with minimal scrutiny. He's been more entertaining than any of his opponents, Republican and Democratic, and that attracts the viewers and advertisers.

Biden has been facing intense pressure to drop out after the debate, but not Trump for his lie-infested performance or his 34 felony convictions. One big difference is that Trump's followers really don't care, while Biden's do.

Lately, Trump has shown a tendency to freeze up, have memory lapses, go off on narcissistic tangents, garble incoherently or appear confused, as when he identified a photo of a woman accusing him of sexual assault as his second wife.

REPUBLICANS HAVE been content to let the opposition battle with itself while ignoring Trump's policies and views – views Biden rightfully calls threats to American democracy.

As one political pro told me, the difference between the two parties is Republicans are scared of a vengeful Trump, who has hounded his opponents out of office, while Democrats are not afraid of Biden, as the current

brouhaha over his age shows.

Don't put all the blame on the candidates, though. The media focuses more on the mechanics of campaigns than the policies of the candidates. Trump is entertaining, a perpetual click bait and ratings booster; Biden is boring. Biden fumbled, Trump was glib, lying and unresponsive, but so what, he was interesting.

CNN, host of the damaging debate, blew it. Trump makes no secret of his disdain for the network, which was so delighted to get him on their screens that they gave him 90 minutes of prime time to do his act virtually uninterrupted. The narrators were like numb fixtures, offering no tough questions he couldn't dodge, no follow-ups and no fact checking. He got away with murder – murdering facts, truth and reality – and was allowed to escape fact-free.

Democrats went into shock after watching Biden while Trump and the Republicans resisted flooding the air with victory whoops. They know better than to interfere when your enemy is self-destructing. Besides, Trump is said to believe Biden would be the easiest Democrat to beat.

THE MEDIA and voters should also be asking tough questions of Trump, not letting his dodge and bully.

The former president has been largely inaccessible to real reporters. He prefers sycophantic pseudo-interviews with the obsequious boosters like Sean Hannity and the Fox/Newsmax crowd. Aside from a lengthy interview with *Time* magazine, he's been able to get away with avoiding answering probing questions, follow-ups and real time fact checking.

HERE ARE SOME QUESTIONS TRUMP SHOULD BE ASKED:

- Who won the 2020 election? Why do you keep claiming that you won the 2020 elections when recounts and audits in the key states and 60 court cases ruled against you, and even your former attorneys-general and the Republican leaders of the Senate and House publicly stated that Biden won?
- You've called for “termination” of parts of the Constitution. Be specific.
- What did you do, or intend to do, with all those classified documents you took home?
- If you never had sex with the porno star, why did you pay her \$130,000 not to talk about it instead of suing her for libel?
- The Supreme Court ruled largely in your favor on presidential immunity. Does that mean President Biden now has all those powers you were



FORMER US PRESIDENT and current presumptive Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump holds a campaign rally. (Brendan McDermid/Reuters)

speaking of? Is he free to take home all his documents, including highly classified papers, when he leaves office? You've said you want to have him investigated: If he has the immunity you claim, does that mean you can't touch them?

- Are you ready to raise the level of income, currently \$168,600, on which people pay Social Security payroll tax, to keep it solvent rather than cut benefits or raise the age of eligibility?

- You've said you can free *Wall Street Journal* reporter Evan Gershkovich because of your good relations with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Why wait until you're elected when you can do it now and reap international praise?

- You said Hamas wouldn't have attacked Israel if you'd been president. What can you do to end the war that President Biden has not? Just how would you get Hamas to give up the hostages and end its terrorist goals and activities?

- Would you put any limitations on weapons sent to Israel? What about a mutual defense treaty with Israel?

- As president, you recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital and the annexation of the Golan Heights. Would you recognize Israeli annexation of the West Bank? Gaza?

- You have spoken of rounding up undocumented migrants and putting them in detention camps prior to mass deportations. What is your plan for countries that refuse to let them return?

- You have spoken about putting Liz Cheney before a military tribunal. Who else and on what charges? You've accused Gen. Mark Milley, your chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, of a “treasonous act” punishable by death. What do you intend to do about that?

- You're calling for President Biden to take a mental acuity test. Would you take the same one administered by neutral experts and make it public?

- You've accused the Biden administration of weaponizing the Department of Justice and the FBI by prosecuting you and your supporters. How does that differ from what you have in mind when you talk about investigating the Biden family, the January 6 committee and others in the current administration?

- You've said Iran is building a “large scale” nuclear weapons arsenal. What do you intend to do about that?

SADLY FOR the country, these and all other questions will go unanswered. Trump won't subject himself to tough interviews because he feels he has nothing to gain and everything to lose. His supporters – his cult – love his defiance and don't care about his sins, and even exult them. Nor does the Republican Party, a wholly-owned MAGA subsidiary, care.

The writer is a Washington-based journalist, consultant, lobbyist, and former American Israel Public Affairs Committee legislative director.

The silent guardians

Data centers are critical for national security

• By GAD BENETT

Imagine waking up one day to find your smartphone unusable, your bank account frozen, and your city's traffic lights stuck. This isn't some distant, sci-fi scenario – it's a potential reality if Israel's data centers were to fail.

In recent times, despite the constant shadow of conflict, our data center industry has been quietly expanding. But why should the typical Israeli care about these enigmatic, hi-tech fortresses?

Think of this: A missile soaring across the sky, targeting not a military base but a modest building near Tel Aviv. Inside, the digital lifelines of millions are housed – from health records to defense communications. This is the new battleground of modern warfare, where the protection of data is as vital as physical defenses.

Data centers, or “server farms” as we call them in Hebrew, are the unsung heroes of our digital age. As the CEO of Techtonic, I've seen how these digital fortresses have become the backbone of our nation's security and economic growth. They're no longer just storage for social media or videos, but guardians of our most critical information. In our region, where geopolitical tensions never cease, the strength of our digital infrastructure is not just important – it's essential.

The importance of data centers goes far beyond national security, significantly impacting Israel's booming tech sector. According to Start-Up Nation Central, Israeli tech firms raised a record \$25.6 billion in 2021. However, this growth highlights a paradox in our digital infrastructure. Despite our “Start-Up Nation” status, much of the computing power behind these innovations comes from major cloud providers like AWS, Azure, and GCP, which have a limited physical presence here. Often, their services are delivered from European data centers, creating a gap between our tech ambitions and our digital sovereignty.

This dependence on foreign data centers highlights the urgent need for strong, local data infrastructure. Data sovereignty – ensuring data is governed by the laws of the country where it's stored – is not just a regulatory issue; it's about national security and economic independence. By keeping our data within our borders in secure, advanced facilities, we retain control over our digital assets, protect sensitive information from foreign meddling, and comply with local data protection laws.

This is especially crucial for government data, defense information, and sensitive business intelligence. Additionally, local, advanced data centers can provide the high-performance computing needed for

technologies like AI and real-time analytics, giving Israeli companies an edge while keeping our data within our own jurisdiction.

WHILE IT is important to recognize potential risks, it's equally vital to note the positive developments in our industry. Israel is leading in developing advanced data center technologies, creating smart, adaptive systems that can withstand both physical and cyber threats. We're seeing more diversification of data center locations, implementation of cutting-edge cybersecurity measures, and a focus on sustainable designs.

At Techtonic, we're part of this progress by building a state-of-the-art data center. Covering 15,000 square meters, this facility represents a significant investment in Israel's digital future. What makes it unique is its pursuit of Tier IV certification, a status held by very few centers in Israel.

This certification ensures the highest levels of reliability and redundancy, guaranteeing that critical services stay operational even in tough situations. Additionally, given Israel's unique threats, we're going beyond standard certifications by fortifying our facility against direct missile impacts – a vital step to ensure availability under any threat.

The importance of robust data centers has clearly been shown during our current state of war, when Israel's Iron Dome system processed real-time data to intercept incoming rockets. Now, with the growing sophistication of cyber warfare, the stakes are even higher.

The fallout from a major data center failure could be disastrous, crippling banking systems, disrupting emergency services, and compromising national security. The 2021 cyber-attack on Israel's water system and the fire at OVHcloud's data center in Strasbourg, France – which disabled millions of websites across Europe, including government portals, banks, and news services – remind us of the vulnerability of critical infrastructure.

As Israel continues to lead in fields like AI and cybersecurity, robust data centers are becoming more crucial. They're not just protecting our present; they're securing our future.

In a world where data is the new currency, Israel's advanced data centers are our digital Fort Knox. They're the silent guardians of our digital future, ensuring that in times of peace or crisis, Israel's technological heart remains strong. By continuing to invest in and develop our data infrastructure, we're not just preparing for potential challenges – we're laying the groundwork for Israel's ongoing success as a leader in the global digital economy.

The writer is founder and CEO of Techtonic.

Zelensky says can't predict Trump's actions if elected

• By PHIL STEWART and IDREES ALI

WASHINGTON (Reuters) – Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Tuesday he could not predict what Donald Trump would do if he regains the US presidency in November, but the whole world, including Russian leader Vladimir Putin, was awaiting the outcome of the ballot.

Zelensky, speaking in Washington as world leaders gather for a NATO summit, said he hoped Trump would not quit the 75-year-old NATO alliance and that the United States would keep supporting Ukraine in its defense against Russia's invasion.

"I don't know (him) very well," Zelensky said of Trump.

He said he had "good meetings" with him during Trump's presidency but said that was before Russia invaded in 2022.

"I can't tell you what he will do if he will be the president of the United States. I don't know."

Trump, the presumptive Republican nominee for the US presidential election in November, has frequently criticized the size of US military support for Ukraine – some \$60 billion since the invasion – and called Zelensky "the greatest salesman ever."

Two of his national security advisers have presented Trump with a plan to end US military aid to Ukraine unless it opened talks with Russia to end the conflict.

Trump's dealings with Zelensky became the subject of his



UKRAINE'S PRESIDENT Volodymyr Zelensky delivers remarks at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute on the sidelines of NATO's 75th anniversary summit in Washington on Tuesday. (Kevin Mohatt/Reuters)

first impeachment as president by the US House in 2019. He was accused of pressing Zelensky to help smear Joe Biden in return for aid, but was acquitted by the Senate in 2020.

On NATO, Trump has said he would "encourage" Russia to do "whatever the hell they want" to any alliance member that did not spend enough on defense and he would not defend them. The NATO charter obliges members to come to the defense of those who are attacked.

Speaking in the wake of a Russia missile strike on the main children's hospital in Kyiv on Monday, Zelensky said those kind of attacks made "you want to kill Putin."

"It's so difficult to lose children. And of course you see these people, you see parents,

and when their children are dying or dead, you want to kill Putin at this moment," Zelensky said.

Zelensky urged US political leaders on Tuesday not to wait for the outcome of the US election in November and move to aid his country and he called for fewer restrictions on the use of US weaponry.

"Everyone is waiting for November. Americans are waiting for November, in Europe, the Middle East, in the Pacific, the whole world is looking towards November and, truly speaking, Putin awaits November too," Zelensky said.

"It is time... to act and not to wait for November or any other month."

Earlier on Tuesday, US President Joe Biden pledged to forcefully defend Ukraine at

the NATO summit.

But Biden, 81, is reeling from 12 days of questions about his fitness for office as some of his fellow Democrats on Capitol Hill and campaign donors fear that he will lose the election after a halting debate performance on June 27.

Trump is leading Biden by 2.1% nationally, according to a polling average maintained by website FiveThirtyEight.

Asked about Putin's views of Biden and Trump, Zelensky said cautiously: "Biden and Trump are very different. But they are supportive (of) democracy. And that's why I think Putin will hate both of them."

Zelensky's choice of venue, the Ronald Reagan Institute, could be another sign of Ukraine's effort to reach out to Republicans.

Andrew Weiss at the Carnegie Endowment think tank said Kyiv has been trying to build "as many bridges to the Republican mainstream establishment as possible."

"There's a process underway in Kyiv of trying to think through the implications of a possible Trump return to the White House," Weiss said.

Zelensky was introduced by top US Senate Republican Mitch McConnell, who lauded the Ukrainian leader and strongly supported greater assistance to Kyiv.

"They need the tools to defend themselves to impose costs on their aggressors and to negotiate from positions of strength," McConnell said.



US PRESIDENT Joe Biden awards NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg the Presidential Medal of Freedom at the NATO event to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the alliance in Washington on Tuesday. (Leah Millis/Reuters)

Biden sounds forceful at NATO summit

• By HANNAH SARISOHN
Jerusalem Post Correspondent

NEW YORK – US President Joe Biden sounded clear and animated as he delivered remarks on Tuesday in Washington where NATO partners gathered to mark the 75th anniversary of the alliance at a critical point for both democracies around the world and the state of Biden's future as a candidate for a second term in office.

The Biden who delivered the remarks at the NATO summit sounded more like the Biden of the State of the Union – sharp, loud and at times yelling to punctuate certain words – and less like the tired, mumbling

Biden of the presidential debate and recent media interviews.

The president announced a historic joint donation of air defense equipment for Ukraine with Germany, Netherlands, Romania and Italy providing the equipment for five additional strategic air defense systems.

"Over the coming months, the United States and our partners intend to provide Ukraine with dozens of additional tactical air defense systems," Biden said. "The United States will make sure that when we export critical defense interceptors, Ukraine goes to the front of the line."

He said Ukraine will receive

"hundreds of additional munitions" over the next year, helping protect Ukrainian cities against Russian missile attacks on the frontlines.

"The war will end with Ukraine remaining a free and independent country. Russia will not prevail, Ukraine will prevail," Biden said.

Biden noted that both Democrats and Republicans are united in support of NATO, knowing that Americans are stronger with their friends.

He concluded his remarks by presenting NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the US's highest civilian honor.

Army chief: Poland must be ready for full-scale conflict

WARSAW (Reuters) – Poland needs to prepare its soldiers for all-out conflict, its armed forces chief of staff said on Wednesday, as the country boosts the number of troops on its border with Russia and Belarus.

Poland's relations with Russia and its ally Belarus have deteriorated sharply since Moscow sent tens of thousands of troops into neighboring Ukraine.

"Today, we need to prepare

our forces for full-scale conflict, not an asymmetric-type conflict," army chief of staff General Wieslaw Kukulka told a press conference.

"This forces us to find a good balance between the border mission and maintaining the intensity of training in the army," he said.

Speaking at the same event, deputy defense minister Pawel Bejda said that as of August,

the number of troops guarding Poland's eastern border would be increased to 8,000 from the current 6,000, with an additional rearguard of 9,000 able to step up within 48 hours notice.

In May, Poland announced details of "East Shield," a 10 billion zloty (\$2.5b.) program to beef up defenses along its border with Belarus and Russia, which it plans to complete the plans by 2028.

Biden meets union leaders as calls from some Democrats to step aside continue

• By TREVOR HUNNICUTT

WASHINGTON (Reuters) – US President Joe Biden returned to the campaign trail on Wednesday, rallying the key constituency of labor leaders, as some fellow Democrats continue to urge him not to run again.

For the past 13 days, the 81-year-old Biden has been working to stem defections from Democratic lawmakers, donors, and other allies worried he might lose to Republican candidate Donald Trump, 78, after Biden's halting June 27 debate performance.

The president was to join the AFL-CIO's executive council meeting in Washington on Wednesday to take questions from leaders of major US labor unions and discuss "their shared commitment to defeating Donald Trump this November," the Biden campaign said.

Labor votes were key to Biden's win over Trump in competitive states, including Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Nevada, in 2020.

Democrats in the US Congress remain deeply divided over whether to fall in line behind Biden or to urge him to step aside because of per-



US PRESIDENT Joe Biden speaks at the NATO event in commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the alliance in Washington on Tuesday. (Yves Herman/Reuters)

sistent questions about his health and acuity. Biden has said he is fit to serve but understands the questions.

Nancy Pelosi, former speaker of the House of Representatives, said on MSNBC on Wednesday she was encouraging her colleagues on Capitol Hill to wait as Biden hosts NATO leaders in Washington this week.

"I've said to everyone: let's just hold off. Whatever you're thinking, either tell somebody privately, but you don't have to put that out on the table until we see how we go

this week," she said, describing Biden's strong remarks at the NATO summit on Tuesday as "spectacular."

Still Pelosi, a longtime Biden ally, declined to say definitively that she wanted Biden to run.

"I want him to do what whatever he decides to do," she said. "We're all encouraging him to make that decision because time is running short."

On Tuesday, Rep. Michelle "Mikie" Sherrill of New Jersey became the seventh House Democrat to call on Biden

publicly to drop out of the race.

Many more Democrats have expressed concern that Biden continuing at the top of the ticket could cost the party the White House and both houses of Congress in November.

But public defections remain a small segment of the 213 Democratic-aligned House members, and the party's leadership continues to back Biden publicly.

No senators have publicly said Biden should stand aside, but Sen. Michael Bennet of Colorado said on Tuesday he did not believe Biden could beat Trump.

Biden, eager to change the story, has surrounded himself with communities of his staunchest supporters, including Black Democratic lawmakers and voters. His campaign has framed sticking with Biden as a return of the loyalty he has shown them through his half-century of public life.

Biden's first 2020 campaign rally, in 2019, was at a Pittsburgh union hall, and the president has made his thick-as-thieves alignment with Big Labor leaders a major pillar of his populist economic platform.

Norway sends F-16s to Ukraine

OSLO (Reuters) – Norway will donate six F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine to help its defense efforts against Russian air attacks, the Norwegian government said in a statement on Wednesday as NATO leaders attended a summit in Washington.

Leaders of NATO member states are poised to unveil new aid to Ukraine to help it defend itself following Russia's invasion in February 2022.

Hoping to change the course of the war, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky wants the 32-member alliance to send more weapons and money, and to offer security guarantees.

Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Stoere said deliveries of the F-16s were to start in 2024.

"Combined with air defense systems, the fighter jets will be vital to enabling the Ukrainians to defend themselves against Russian air attacks," Stoere said in a statement.

The prime minister first announced that Norway would donate the F-16s to Kyiv in August last year, but didn't say how many would be given.

Since then, Oslo has sent two F-16s to Denmark to be used for the training of Ukrainian pilots.

F-16s have been on Ukraine's wish list for a long time because

of their destructive power and global availability. The fighter jet is equipped with a 20mm cannon and can carry bombs, rockets and missiles.

A senior NATO official said this week that Ukraine had not yet amassed the munitions and personnel it needs to mount its own large-scale offensive operations.

Denmark has committed to give 19 jets, while the Netherlands has promised to send 24 aircraft. Both countries have been driving forces behind an international coalition to supply Ukraine with F-16s.

Norway has replaced its own F-16s with F-35s.

Le Pen accuses Left of inciting 'Capitol Hill' style protest

• By BENOIT VAN OVERSTRAELEN and ELIZABETH PINEAU

PARIS (Reuters) – French far-right party leader Marine Le Pen on Wednesday drew parallels between a hard-left politician's call for a march towards the prime minister's office and the assault on Capitol Hill by supporters of former US president Donald Trump.

The comments marked a hardening of language by Le Pen, who has framed tactical voting in Sunday's inconclusive parliamentary ballot as an establishment plot to keep her party out of power.

The left-wing New Popular Front (NFP) unexpectedly won most seats but with no group having gained an absolute majority, France has been plunged into uncertainty, with no obvious path to a

stable government.

Le Pen said the NFP has almost "subversive attitudes since they are calling for the [Hôtel] Matignon to be taken by force, from what we could understand," referring to the prime minister's residence.

"It's their assault on the Capitol," Le Pen added, in a reference to when Trump supporters stormed the US Capitol on January 6, 2021, in a bid to overturn his election defeat.

The hard-Left France Unbowed, which is part of the NFP, immediately rejected her accusation.

After President Emmanuel Macron asked centrist Prime Minister Gabriel Attal to stay on for now to run current affairs, former France Unbowed lawmaker Adrien Quatennens had accused Macron of wanting to "steal"

the Left's victory and suggested a "big popular march" to the prime minister's office.

Quatennens said Le Pen was "nuts" to see his post for a march as a call for insurrection.

Le Pen has spent the last few years cleaning up the image of a party once known for its xenophobic and antisemitic attitudes and she now has to decide in which direction to take if it is to break through and win power in the 2027 presidential election.

Polls had projected her anti-immigration, Eurosceptic National Rally (RN) would win Sunday's election but the RN finished third behind the NFP and Macron's centrists.

The leftist NFP, which combines France Unbowed, the Communists, Greens and Socialists, continued talks to

try and agree on a cabinet and policy plans.

Amid warnings from rating agencies, financial markets, the European Commission and France's euro zone partners are all watching closely to see if the impasse can be broken.

It is customary for the president to ask the biggest parliamentary group to form a government but the constitutionally he is not obliged to do so.

Options include a broad coalition or a minority government or a technocratic government led by a non-politically affiliated person, either of which would seek to pass laws in parliament on a case-by-case basis, with ad hoc agreements.

Phones are ringing constantly, political sources have told

Reuters, with centrists hoping they can reach a deal with the conservative The Republicans and edge the Left out.

"I think there is an alternative to the New Popular Front," Aurore Bergé, a senior lawmaker from Macron's Renaissance group told France 2 TV. "I think the French don't want the NFP's platform to be implemented, I think they don't want tax increases."

Any government – of the Left, Center, or a broader coalition – could quickly fall victim to a confidence vote from the opposition if it has not secured sufficient solid support.

Lawmaker Pieyre-Alexandre Anglade, from Macron's Renaissance, told Reuters a broad union of moderates of the Left and Right was the only viable solution.

UK search for suspect after triple murder

LONDON (Reuters) – British police launched a massive manhunt on Wednesday after three women, the wife and daughters of a BBC horse racing commentator, were killed in a leafy town outside London in an incident believed to have involved a crossbow.

Officers discovered the three victims, ages 25, 28, and 61, with serious injuries at the house in Bushey, 20 miles northwest of London, on Tuesday evening. They died at the scene a short time later.

The BBC said that the women were Carol Hunt, the wife of its commentator John Hunt, and two of their daughters.

A search involving armed officers was launched for suspect Kyle Clifford. Police have

appealed to him to give himself up and warned the public not to approach the 26-year-old.

Chief superintendent Jon Simpson called the incident "horrific," telling reporters a crossbow and possibly other weapons were used.

"Our overarching objective today is to protect public safety and to locate Kyle Clifford who is wanted in connection with the murder of the three women in what we believe is a targeted incident," Simpson said.

Friends and colleagues of Hunt expressed their shock.

"Impossible to comprehend the pain. Just know we are all here for you John. We love you pal – racing loves you," ITV horse racing commentator Matt Chapman said on X.

Wondering what has happened to their country

After October 7, Australian Jews grapple with mass doxxing

• By RON KAMPEAS/JTA

SYDNEY – The shaming of hundreds of Australian Jewish creatives played out very much in public with names and photos and threats, at least one targeting a child.

Now, months later, it lingers in silences – friends unfollowed, musicians quieted, and colleagues ducked.

In February, a number of prominent Jews who had expressed anguish over Hamas's October 7 massacre had their personal information outed by pro-Palestinian activists in a doxxing incident that stunned the country. The "Zio600" list was meant to isolate "Zionists," ostensibly in retribution for threats to the careers of Israel's critics.

The subsequent harassment and isolation of those on the list transformed Australian Jews. It changed how the community, known for its disproportionate number of descendants of Holocaust survivors, views the land they love – a place they thought was far removed from the hatreds that plagued their forebears.

"This happened in Australia – lovely, innocent, innocent, bloody innocent Australia," said Geoff Sirmai, a writer, actor, PR professional, and child of a Hungarian survivor, who was on the doxxing list. He spoke as he watched winter harbor waters rustle seacraft, cradled by the Sydney Opera House and the Harbor Bridge.

The doxxing happened in "the country that our parents chose because it was so far away," said Estelle Rozinski, an artist and the daughter of Polish survivors who was also on the list.

Some of the most prominent targets of the doxxing described the fallout to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, along with their sense of having been betrayed not just by ostensible colleagues and not just by harsh critics of Israel, but by the country they call home.

THE FIRST SHOCK

Lee Kofman, based in Melbourne, is celebrated in Australian literary circles for her candid writings on sex, women, relationships, and writing itself, as well as for mentoring other writers. Her signature work is *The Writer Laid Bare*.

She found herself struck silent after October 7. Kofman was born in the former Soviet Union, and before she ended up in Australia, her family had emigrated to Ashdod, a port city not far from the Gaza border communities where Hamas terrorists massacred approximately 1,200 people.

The murder of more than 360 people at the Nova music festival – and the failure of those in her Australian milieu to condemn it – traumatized her.

"When I was a teenager, I used to go to music festivals, like the Nova festival, so just the idea that some people didn't care a bit, the people around me..." she said in an interview, trailing off.

She tells other writers that a sense of urgency is essential to writing. When it comes to the topics she writes about, she feels like she has lost that sense.

"I could write. I just didn't feel like I should," said Kofman, 50. "It just didn't feel urgent anymore."

The shock intensified on October 9, when a show of support for Israel at the Sydney Opera House turned ugly.

Jews were at the landmark to watch it bathed in blue and white light in what was supposed to be an emotional balm. Instead, they heard pro-Palestinian marchers shouting "F— the Jews" and "Where's the Jews?" and burning flags. (Organizers of the pro-Palestinian protest condemned what they said was "vile antisemitism" by a small group among them.)

Police advised the Jews to disperse and stay away. The sense of alienation deepened for those who had ventured out to find mutual support.



PRO-PALESTINIAN activists demonstrate outside the Sydney Opera House on Oct. 9 last year. Since then, things have gotten worse. (Lisa Maree Williams/Getty Images)



LARA GOODRIDGE, a musician, poses with her dog, Ziggy, in a cafe in Sydney last month. (Ron Kampeas)



GEOFF SIRMAI, an actor and writer, poses in front of the Sydney Opera House last month. (Ron Kampeas)

"The Opera House is iconic; it belongs to all Australians," said Sirmai, 62, who was considering heading over to the memorial when his phone lit up with notifications of the unrest. "It's a public place, and to be told to stay away for our own safety seemed wrong."

A police investigation afterward compounded the feelings of isolation. It rejected claims that pro-Palestinian protesters had said "Gas the Jews," an indictable offense in Australia, saying that those who had reported the claim had actually heard "Where's the Jews?"

That interpretation did not soothe Australian Jews. "Where's the Jews," if that was indeed what was chanted, is in many ways far worse because it shows a desire to menace, threaten, and find Jews and no doubt do some horrible things if they were able to find them," Alex Rychkin, the CEO of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

COMING TOGETHER

On Oct. 21, a venerable left-wing Australian literary journal, *Overland*, published an open letter admonishing the left-leaning prime minister, Anthony Albanese, and Arts Minister Tony Burke for opposing a parliamentary motion to "condemn war crimes perpetrated by the State of Israel." Both had been known for their pro-Palestinian sympathies.

Reading the letter and seeing among its hundreds of signatories people whom she knew and worked with, Kofman felt a sense of resolve.

"It felt like what was urgent was to do some community work, and this is when I started the WhatsApp group" for Jewish creatives and academics to consult and commiserate, she said. That was Oct. 30.

"I just lost faith because there's so many people from the literary industry signing these really ignorant, not-based-on-facts, open letters even before Israel attacked Gaza. I just kind of lost faith in the whole enterprise of lit-

erature," Kofman said.

The appeal to condemn Israel did not shock Jewish creatives as much as the letter's language and its blitheness about Oct. 7.

"Stop the genocide in Gaza" was its headline, with the sub-headline "Artists Against Apartheid." There was a single reference halfway through the letter to the Oct. 7 massacres, which it described as "armed attacks" that should be seen in the context of Palestinian suffering.

Kofman's group soon burgeoned to 600 members, some added by friends without being asked. The chat was private, and members were explicitly asked not to share its contents. Its first mission was a public response to the Overland letter.

Lara Goodridge, a rock violinist with an international following, designed a website, and Sirmai organized outreach to the media. It went up on Nov. 7, a month after the attack.

It addressed "Fellow Australian creatives and academics" and expressed heartbreak over the massacre and the Palestinians killed in the Israeli response. The signers then turned to their colleagues and peers.

Some colleagues had reached out privately to empathize, it said, "but in the public arena, as far as our industries are concerned, silence and justifications often prevail."

The co-editor of *Overland*, Jonathan Dunk, mocked his magazine's Jewish critics as "those comfortable of Melbourne with the blasphemous temerity to claim themselves made 'unsafe' by a slogan or a poster."

He praised "the humbling courage and eloquence of the many progressive Jewish activists who refuse to let Israel act in their name, which has truly exemplified the greatest of human moral potential."

The WhatsApp group did not flag. It became a forum for sharing uncomfortable work experiences, ugly street encounters with protesters, and incidents of antisemitism.

There were consultations

about how to explain the war to friends and colleagues who were blaming Israel. For Goodridge, it was a means of coping.

"It was a lifeline to a lot of us," said Goodridge, 52. "I very quickly became very vocal. I needed it. I really needed it. I'm in the arts world. I'm a violinist and singer, and I had already started to try to counter the narrative out there."

Sirmai recalls anxious gossip about what was happening to Jews in the arts community, including speculation that an Australian production of *Rent* would strip the Jewishness out of Mark Cohen, a character Jewish writer Jonathan Larson based on his friends. (The musical opened in March, and Cohen remained Jewish.)

"Most of it was expressions of support and sympathy for each others' experiences," Sirmai said.

There were also consultations about how and whether to complain about public figures who were attacking Israel. One discussion focused on Clementine Ford, a feminist writer and a strident critic of Israel.

Not long after the attacks, Ford derided Jewish feminists who solicited their peers for condemnation of the sexual violence committed on Oct. 7. "I don't care that you felt betrayed or let down, and I especially don't care that you want to have a big crybaby rant," she said on Instagram in December.

Sirmai, who had authored a popular book about consumers' rights, had the same publisher as Ford, Allen & Unwin.

"She's attacking Jewish women in the most vicious language possible, and what do we do about that?" he said in the interview. "And I put my hand up" on WhatsApp "and I said, 'Ah, actually, you know, I'm with the same publisher. I wonder what they would have to say.'"

He never did call Allen & Unwin. "Not that I did anything with that, but it just occurred to me," he said.

A few people were venting, Kofman said. "It was a very small portion of the chat, plus

we did this as individuals," she explained. "It wasn't a coordinated attempt."

On Feb. 1, Ford told her followers on Facebook that "there have been some really diabolical and coordinated campaigns being run in secret by people determined to silence the voices of pro-Palestinian people."

THE SECOND SHOCK

"I was one of the people that they identified in the photos," said Lucy Taksa, a professor of management. "They used my title, as well as my name."

On Feb. 7, Ford posted a link on social media and a QR code to what she called a "leaked Zionist group chat." She wrote, "If you want an insight into how coordinated efforts are to silence Palestinian activists and their allies, you can read the leaked chat here."

The link opened up some 900 pages of WhatsApp conversations. There was a spreadsheet listing names, job titles, and quotes from the WhatsApp group, meant to be seen as incriminating. There were about 100 photos gathered from public media of the WhatsApp participants.

Sirmai, Taksa, Goodridge, and Kofman were among the top targets.

Ford has hundreds of thousands of followers across platforms, and other anti-Zionist activists also posted the link, which had already been in circulation.

The harassment was immediate, reaching not just the top targets but anyone on the list. One family shut down their Melbourne area shop and went into hiding after they received a message with a photograph of their child, saying, "I know where you live," *The Jewish Independent* reported. The shop was daubed with antisemitic graffiti.

Other families in heavily Jewish neighborhoods were seeking homes elsewhere, the *Herald Sun* reported.

Musicians who belonged to the WhatsApp group suddenly lost gigs. Artists lost commissions. An art school's website was peppered with anti-Israel comments.

includes research on diversity, told the research team she belonged to that she had been doxxed and that it could affect the research.

Most of her colleagues, including indigenous people on the panel, were sympathetic, she said. But one, who was Jewish, was livid. "I was not supporting anti-colonialism," she quoted him as accusing her. The next day, he emailed her, quoting not just her remarks in the spreadsheet but elsewhere. He had searched for her name in the 900-page document.

"I was incensed," she said. Taksa, 65, arrived in Australia as a toddler from Poland in 1961, and her family, with relatives still in Poland, had closely followed the news during the intense period of Polish anti-Zionism and antisemitism in 1968. Her colleague's stridency, she said, reminded her of the intimate betrayals of that time.

"The childhood echoes of this list of Jews were profound. That they had trawled this list was the worst thing," she said. She left the research team.

Taksa said she was targeted for suggesting, in response to the Overland piece, that members who were academics could raise the issue with the vice chancellors (equivalent to a dean or a president) of their academic institutions, as many of the signatories of the Overland letter were also academics. Critics cast Taksa as seeking terminations but she said she was recommending a routine means of addressing concerns.

"I have been writing to vice chancellors complaining about treatments of every underprivileged person for my whole career," she said. "Gender issues, treatment of Muslim students, refugee scholarships."

A SENSE OF OTHERNESS

Australian Jews have long said that this was the land of opportunity, the far country, stripped of hate and history, flat with light and land and bright with promise.

There are Australian jokes and Jewish jokes, and there is one Australian Jewish joke that has been told many times: A refugee from post-Holocaust Europe lands in Melbourne and is sent to a work detail. A foreman approaches and asks, in his thick Australian accent, "Did you come to die?" The refugee, incensed, straightens up and says, "I came to live, to start anew!" The foreman looks puzzled. "Did you come today or yesterday?"

This was the cliché absorbed by the second and third generations of Holocaust survivors: Australia was a safe, boundless space for Jews. They number about 120,000, concentrated mostly in Melbourne and Sydney.

Now, Sirmai says, he has a sense of otherness. He recalled a meeting that organizers of the Jewish open letter had with Burke, the arts minister, after Oct. 7. As he was leaving the meeting, he saw a group wearing keffiyehs heading in but didn't think it was untoward; Burke was getting the range of opinions – at least, until Burke's aide called Sirmai and told him the minister had met with his "opposite number."

"Are you saying we're anti-Palestinian?" he said he asked her. "Because that's not what we were representing." She backed off, but the tenor of the meeting had changed for him. "After all of that, they didn't get it."

The clichés about Australia now seem dated, never really true, Jews said recently at Shabbat and holiday dinners and over coffee.

"I'm understanding, for the first time in my life, what antisemitism really looks like, and that it's alive and well, and how it can happen," Goodridge said. "I've been saying to people, this is our time to understand it. And every single generation of Jews have understood, have had this moment. This is just our time."

The repercussions could be intensely personal. Taksa, whose academic discipline

THE JERUSALEM POST DAILY BRAIN TEASERS



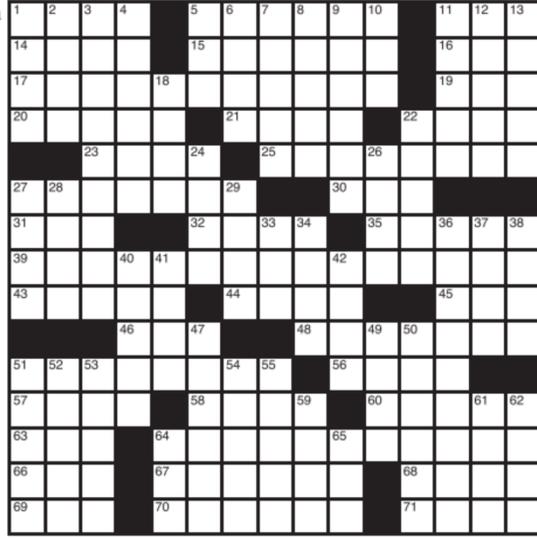
ACROSS

- 1 Satisfied sounds
5 Comforting text during a bad storm, say
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14 Political coalition
15 Econ. figure used to highlight income inequality
16 Every last one
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20 Surgical tube
21 "Deal"
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23 Radiate happiness
25 *Floating lunar particles
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30 Doc's order
31 Bygone space station
32 Wine category
35 Breakaway groups
39 *Gravity powered nourishment
43 Anesthetic of old
44 Praise
45 Musician Yoko
46 Debtor's letters
48 Words on some missing posters
51 *Tips to the next dollar, say
56 Wolfe of fiction

- 57 Professionals who work from home about a quarter of the time?
58 Asian language
60 Channels of communication
63 "___ me guess ..."
64 Audio technique, or a feature of the answers to the starred clues
66 "Me" problem
67 Terrarium pet
68 "Night" author Wiesel
69 ___ Juan, Puerto Rico
70 Wipes
71 Related groups

- DOWN
1 Building blocks
2 Bushels
3 Residential delivery?
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6 Department store department
7 Genesis city
8 Speed skater Ohno
9 Swifties, e.g.
10 Word with public or private
11 Fried Japanese cutlet

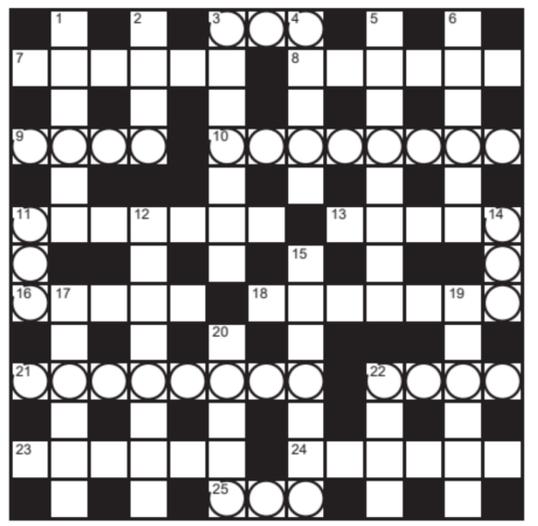
- 12 Takes a high way
13 Spiked shoe
18 Saves or assists
22 Said more
24 Griffin who created "Jeopardy!"
26 Loch ___ monster
27 Québec pal
28 ___ roller
29 Instagram video
33 23andMe material
34 Genre for Otis Redding
36 Predator with powerful jaws
37 Lifford of "Queen Sugar"
38 Ad
40 Bride straps
41 Former Yank who's now part owner of the Tim-



- berwolves
42 Japanese noodle
47 American leg of a concert series
49 Frozen Four game
50 "Jurassic Park" dinos
51 Principles
52 Last Greek letter
53 Supermodel Kate
54 Saldaña's "Star Trek" role
55 Slacks
59 Run in neutral
61 Still fighting
62 Grows older
64 Sault ___ Marie
65 Month, in Mexico

QUICK CROSSWORD

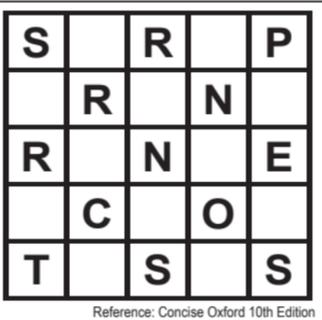
- Across
3 Actor's prompt (3)
7 The middle of the FBI? (6)
8 Elbow-room; margin of error(6)
9 Thespian production (4)
10 Broadway and West End tourist magnets (8)
11 Cub Scout's female counterpart (7)
13 ___ and services (dual components of economic output) (5)
16 The line y = 0, in math (1-4)
18 Highest of all; above all else (STOP TOM anagram) (7)
21 Broadway fare (light plays with happy endings) (8)
22 The actors in a play, collectively (4)
23 12th grader (6)
24 Deli cold cut (6)
25 Perform lines in 10 ACROSS (3)
Down
1 He did it in many whodunits(6)
2 Impose, as a fine (4)
3 Large cloth raised at the beginning of a play (7)
4 Comedienne ___ DeGeneres (5)
5 Public lavatory (8)
6 Prohibited (6)
11 ___ office: Where theater tickets are sold (3)
12 Polite prevarication (5,3)
14 Filming or theatrical location (3)
15 Be made up (of) (7)



- 17 Web-footed shorebird (OCTAVE anagram) (6)
19 ___ Street: Where Bert and Ernie live(6)
20 Beauty queen's crown (5)
22 "Who ya gonna ___? Ghostbusters! (4)



5x5
Insert the missing letters to complete ten words - five across the grid and five down.
5509
BROWN
RADIO
ICONS
DEUCE
ERRED
PREVIOUS SOLUTION (other combinations may occasionally be possible)



su | do | ku
© Puzzles by Pappocom
HARD
6 7 4
1 5 7
4 3 6
8 2 3
6 9
5 1 7
1 5 6
9 2 6
4 3 8

WORD-BUILDER
5549
L A E
P D
How many words of three or more letters, including plurals, can you make from the five letters, using each letter only once? No foreign words or words beginning with a capital are allowed. There's at least one five-letter word.
TODAY'S GOALS:
Good - 12 Excellent - 19 Amazing - 23
SOLUTION 5548: fist, fit, fits, ifs, its, sift, sit, swift, wis, wit, wit, wits.

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BAYSERGTEAM

TELEVISION

PROGRAMS

KAN HD (Y/H11)

06:00 Morning News - Israel at War
07:00 This Morning - with Ilii Sha-har
08:00 Akiva Novick and Rina Mazia-ach
10:00 Roni Kuban and Omri Assen-heim
12:00 Deciphering India - Episode 3
13:00 Life According to Dvir - 9. Obesity
13:28 The Future is Here 2 - Epi-ode 4
14:00 Our Food Ambassadors 4 - Episode 9
15:00 The World Today - with Yoav Zehavi
16:00 Game of Pockets - with Liel Spencere (2014)
16:45 The Five O'Clock Edition - with Maya Rac
17:45 Through the Looking Glass - with Guy Zoh
17:58 Israel at War - Ayala Hasson
19:50 The Evening News - with Michal Rabinovic
21:30 Carlos the Jackal - Episode 3
22:28 Hitchhikers 7 - Jerusalem, Part 3
22:50 Through the Looking Glass - with Guy Zoh
23:03 Night News - with Akiva Novick
23:33 Checkout! 3 - 20. Chuppah

KESHET HD (Y/H12)

06:00 News Flash
06:10 The Morning Headlines
07:00 News Flash
07:08 The Morning News With Nesli Barda
09:30 News Flash
09:35 Special Broadcast - With Yoav Limor
11:00 Kitchen Winners - Favorite Dishes: Part
11:30 Dancing with the Stars
13:00 Special News Broadcast - Elmaz Mangisto
15:00 Today's edition - With Ofer Hadad
16:55 Five With Yaron Avraam
17:45 6:00 PM with...
19:00 Special News Broadcast - Keren Marciano
19:55 Main Edition
21:30 Dancing with the Stars
23:13 The Lottery
23:18 Einav and Nadav

RESHET HD (Y/H13)

06:00 News Flash
06:05 Morning Fitness
06:17 This Morning with Omer and Rotem - Previ
07:00 This Morning - Omer Yardeni and Rotem Isra
09:30 News Flash
09:35 Starting the Day - Yarden and Elad
10:00 News Flash
10:05 Starting the Day - Yarden and Elad
11:00 News Flash
11:05 Starting the Day - Yarden and Elad
12:00 News Flash
12:05 The Legal Countdown - Doron Herman
12:45 We Came Here to Bake - 2. East Jerusalem
13:00 News Flash
13:05 We Came Here to Bake - 2. East Jerusalem
13:10 Beauty Blender
13:45 The Tube - Guy Lerer
14:00 News Flash
14:05 The Tube - Guy Lerer
14:20 Big Brother - Episode 21
15:00 News Flash
15:05 Big Brother - Episode 21
16:00 Showtime
16:58 Today's Talk - With Lucy Aharish
17:59 Almog at Six
18:59 War Zone - Raviv Druker
19:55 The Main News Edition
21:15 Big Brother - Episode 23
23:00 The Tube - Guy Lerer
23:30 The Past Day - With Tal Ber-man
00:00 New Love - Noya's Ex

HOT CHANNEL 3 (H3)

08:12 The Good Fight 3
09:11 Love Me
10:00 Far North
10:51 A Million Little Things 3
11:36 Love Me
12:24 Little Bird
13:12 Northern Exposure 6
13:56 The Good Fight 3
14:55 Days of Our Lives
15:35 The Young and the Restless, Yr. 46
16:13 The Bold and the Beautiful (2 eps)
17:00 Days of Our Lives
17:40 The Young and the Restless, Yr. 46
18:18 A Million Little Things 3
18:34 The Sarah
19:46 Little Bird
20:31 The Hostage
21:16 A Million Little Things 3
22:00 Indal
22:40 Northern Exposure 6
23:29 The Hostage
00:18 The Good Fight 3

HOT ISRAELI ENTERTAINMENT

06:00 Renewal of Broadcasts at 08:00
08:00 My Sister Jackie 3
08:23 Koka Ltd., Season 2
08:52 Nasrin 2
09:27 The Champ
10:04 Love Is Just around the Cor-ner Season 2
10:36 The Game of Life
11:20 Psych Talk
11:51 Refa'elitz 2
12:18 Spin
12:44 Multiple 2
13:08 Multiple 2
13:38 The Champ
14:16 Love Is Just around the Cor-ner Season 2
14:51 The Game of Life
15:38 Refa'elitz 2
16:08 Spin
16:33 The Champ
17:12 Love Is Just around the Cor-ner Season 2
17:46 The Game of Life
18:34 The Sade Family
19:00 Refa'elitz 2
19:35 Koka Ltd., Season 2
20:03 The Champ
20:39 Love Is Just around the Cor-ner Season 2
21:11 The Game of Life
22:00 Desert Rose
22:24 Koka Ltd., Season 2
22:54 Refa'elitz 2
23:25 The Champ
00:01 Love Is Just around the Cor-ner Season 2
00:33 The Game of Life
01:49 Desert Rose
02:15 Psych Talk
02:43 Psych Talk
03:10 The Sade Family
03:36 My Sister Jackie 3
03:59 Renewal of Broadcasts at 08:00

HOT HBO (H4)

11:00 My Brilliant Friend 2
09:30 Algiers Confidential
10:27 Ten Percent

11:20 The Thief, His Wife and the Canoe
12:09 Manhunt 2
12:57 My Brilliant Friend 2
13:58 Algiers Confidential
14:54 Ten Percent
15:46 The Thief, His Wife and the Canoe
16:35 My Brilliant Friend 2
17:36 Munich Games
18:23 Ten Percent
19:15 The Thief, His Wife and the Canoe
20:02 Bad Behaviour
20:59 My Brilliant Friend 2
22:50 Wreck 2
22:50 Jerrod Carmichael Reality Show
23:19 Dear Vivi
00:09 Industry
00:59 Wreck 2

HOT ZONE (HS)

07:11 FBI: Most Wanted 4
07:54 Law & Order: SVU 25
08:36 FBI 5
09:17 The Rookie 3
10:00 Law & Order 22
10:42 Station 19 S. 3
11:26 S.W.A.T 7
12:07 Law & Order: SVU 25
12:49 FBI: Most Wanted 4
13:32 Chicago PD 7
14:14 FBI 5
14:55 The Rookie 3
15:38 Station 19 S. 3
16:22 Law & Order: SVU 25
17:05 Law & Order 22
17:46 FBI: Most Wanted 4
18:29 FBI 5
19:10 S.W.A.T 7
19:51 The Rookie 3
20:34 Station 19 S. 3
21:18 Law & Order: SVU 25
22:00 FBI 5
22:42 Law & Order 23
23:24 FBI: Most Wanted 4

YES TV DRAMA

06:00 Malkat Hayofi Shel Jerusalem
06:34 Becoming Elizabeth
07:36 Station 19 6
08:26 Nancy Drew 4
09:14 The Resort
09:58 The Bold And The Beautiful 2020-2021
10:25 The Young And The Restless 49
11:05 Malkat Hayofi Shel Jerusalem
11:39 Becoming Elizabeth
12:39 Station 19 6
13:24 The Resort
14:10 Malkat Hayofi Shel Jerusalem
14:44 Nancy Drew 4
15:29 The Resort
16:15 The Bold And The Beautiful 2020-2021
16:40 The Young And The Restless 49
17:20 Becoming Elizabeth
18:20 Station 19 6
19:05 Maryland
19:55 The Bold And The Beautiful 2020-2021
20:20 The Young And The Restless 49
21:00 Our House
21:50 Nolly
22:40 Dr. Death
23:49 The Great 3
00:32 The Great 3
01:27 The Great 3
02:22 Yellowjackets

YES TV ACTION

06:31 Chicago Fire 9
07:13 Chicago Fire 9
07:54 Resident Alien
08:39 The Equalizer
09:22 Law & Order: Organized Crime 2
10:04 Law & Order: Organized Crime 2
10:45 Law & Order: Criminal Intent Toronto
11:28 Fire Country 2
12:09 Chicago Fire 9
12:51 Chicago Fire 9
13:32 The Equalizer
14:15 Law & Order: Organized Crime 2
14:57 Law & Order: Organized Crime 2
15:38 Resident Alien
16:23 Resident Alien
17:07 Chicago Fire 9
17:48 Chicago Fire 9
18:30 Fire Country 2
19:12 Law & Order: Criminal Intent Toronto
19:55 The Equalizer
20:38 Law & Order: Organized Crime 2
21:20 Law & Order: Organized Crime 3
22:00 House Of The Dragon 2
22:55 The Chi 6
23:40 Kvothe 2
00:03 The Last Of Us 01-04
02:02 Baptiste 2

YES TV COMEDY

06:35 The Neighborhood 5
07:00 The Neighborhood 5
07:50 Young & Hungry 3
08:15 Young & Hungry 3
08:40 Grown-ish 5
09:05 Parks And Recreations 5
09:30 Parks And Recreations 5
09:55 The Neighborhood 5
10:20 The Neighborhood 5
10:45 Young & Hungry 3
11:10 Young & Hungry 3
11:35 Grown-ish 5
12:00 Grown-ish 5
12:25 Parks And Recreations 5
12:50 Parks And Recreations 5
13:15 How I Met Your Mother 5
13:40 How I Met Your Mother 5
14:05 Young Sheldon 6
14:25 Young Sheldon 6
14:45 Friends 1
15:10 Friends 1
15:35 Schitt's Creek 2
16:00 Schitt's Creek 2
16:25 Married With Children 10
16:50 Married With Children 10
17:15 How I Met Your Mother 5
17:40 How I Met Your Mother 5
18:05 Young Sheldon 6
18:25 Young Sheldon 6
18:45 Friends 1
19:10 Friends 1
19:35 Schitt's Creek 3
20:00 Schitt's Creek 3
20:25 Married With Children 10
20:50 Married With Children 10
21:15 How I Met Your Mother 5
21:40 How I Met Your Mother 5
22:05 Young Sheldon 6
22:25 Young Sheldon 6
22:45 Friends 1
23:10 Friends 1
23:35 Married With Children 10
00:00 Married With Children 10
00:25 Entourage 5
00:55 Entourage 5
01:20 The Neighborhood 5
01:45 The Neighborhood 5

MIDDLE EAST TV (Y109/H150)

11:00 Rawhide
12:00 Touched by an Angel
13:00 The 700 Club
14:00 Cross Talk With Dr. Randy Weiss
14:30 Growing in Glory
15:00 The Rifleman
15:30 The Rifleman
16:00 Gunsmoke
17:00 Rawhide
18:00 Rawhide
18:30 It's Supernatural
19:00 The 700 Club

20:00 The Chosen
21:00 One America News Network
22:00 It's Supernatural
22:30 Israel Daily
23:00 Manna Fest with Perry Stone
23:30 Wonders Without Numbers with David Rives
00:00 Good Week Israel
00:30 The Rifleman
01:00 The Rifleman

HISTORY (Y37/H43)

06:00 Unexplained With William Shatner 3 - 34
06:43 Ancient Aliens - 14 - 13
07:26 The Food That Built The World 5 - 6
08:09 The Toys That Built The World 2 - 6
08:52 The Curse Of Oak Island 11 - 25
09:35 The Proof Is Out There 4 - 22
10:17 Beyond The Battlefield - 1
11:00 The Bermuda Triangle: Into Cursed Waters
11:42 Unexplained With William Shatner 3 - 34
12:25 Ancient Aliens - 14 - 13
13:07 The Food That Built The World 5 - 4
13:49 The Toys That Built The World 2 - 4
14:33 The Curse Of Oak Island 11 - 18
15:15 The Proof Is Out There 4 - 22
15:57 Beyond The Battlefield - 1
16:40 State Behind The Scenes
17:33 The Bermuda Triangle: Into Cursed Waters
18:15 History's Greatest Mysteries 5 - 7
18:57 The Curse Of Oak Island 11 - 22
19:39 The Food That Built The World 5 - 7
20:21 The Toys That Built The World 2 - 7
21:03 Beyond Skinwalker Ranch - 2
21:45 Pawn Stars Do America 2 - 13
23:06 The Bermuda Triangle: Into Cursed Waters
23:48 Ancient Aliens - 14 - 15
00:38 The Food That Built The World 5 - 6
01:20 The Toys That Built The World 2 - 6
02:04 Beyond Oak Island - 3 - 1
02:46 The Proof Is Out There 4 - 22
03:28 Beyond The Battlefield - 1
04:10 The Bermuda Triangle: Into Cursed Waters
04:54 Ancient Aliens - 14 - 14

CLASSICA HD

06:16 Semi-final I: Debussy, Chopin and Liszt
06:47 Classica Spotlight
07:00 Cellibidache: The Triumphant Return
07:55 Dvorak: Othello - Concert Overturn - 9, B
08:31 Air Crash Investigation 17 - 5. Deadly D
09:20 Final: Valerie Eickhoff
09:39 Documentary: Heitor Vila-Lobos
10:06 Liszt: Due Poemi Sinfonici
10:34 Classica Spotlight
11:01 Modena - The Belcanto School
11:27 Mosaïque Project
12:32 Beethoven: Violin Concerto, Op. 61
13:14 Beethoven: Septet in E-flat major (2020)
13:58 Schubert: Four Impromptus, Op. 90
14:26 Classica Spotlight
15:00 Between Church and The-atre
16:12 Chopin: Piano Concertos No. 1 and 2
17:44 Beethoven: Symphony No. 9 (2000)
18:50 A Mozart: Concert from Berlin
20:04 Bartok: Romanian Folk Dances
20:18 Heavenly Voices: The Legacy of Farinelli
21:10 Rachmaninoff: Piano Con-certo No. 1
21:37 Classica Spotlight
22:00 Dance: Le Sacre
23:15 Brahms: Symphony No. 1 (Welser-Most)
23:58 Brahms: Violin Sonata No. 1, Op. 78
00:17 Bach: Sonatas for Violin and Piano
00:00 Classica Spotlight
01:00 Walken in the Garden of Earthly Delight
03:03 Silent Night, Holy Night
04:05 Who Has Stolen the Bolero by Ravel?
04:57 Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 1 (2022)

YES DOCU (Y8)

08:05 Broadcasts Will Resume Soon
08:10 John McCain: For Whom The Bell Tolls In-depth look at the life of John McCain, from his time as a POW in Vietnam to his three decades of service in the US Senate. Dir. Peter W. Kunhardt. 2018.
09:50 South To Black Power New York Times columnist Charles Blow calls for a "reverse Great Migration" of African Americans from the North back to the South to reclaim the land and culture they left behind. Dir.: Sam Pollard, Llewellyn Smith. 2023.
11:20 Icons Unearthed: Marvel - Ep.4 Eight part documentary series. Cast, crew, and experts reveal never-before-heard stories about the Marvel Cinematic Universe and its most iconic film and television series of all time. 2023
12:05 Mr. Saturday Night Film tells the tale of Robert Siggwood, the music executive behind the Bee Gees, whose work on films Grease and Saturday Night Fever made him one of the most decorated impresario's of the disco era. Dir. John Maggio. 2021
13:25 The Museum Ran Tal's documentary that observes, examines and ponders Israel's most important cultural institution, the Israel Museum. The film follows the visitors, descends to the storerooms, labs and conference rooms... 2017.
14:40 The Longest Goodbye Social isolation affects millions of people, even Mars-bound astronauts. A savvy NASA psychologist is tasked with protecting these daring explor-ers. Dir. Ido Mizrahy. Israel-Canada. 2023
16:10 No accident In August 2017, white supremacists rallied in Charlottesville, Virginia, viciously attack-ing counter-protestors. Two lawyers decided to sue a group of violent rightwing protestors... Dir. Kristi Jacobson. 2023
17:45 Cunningham (2019) The iconic Merce Cunningham and the last generation of his dance compa-ny is stunningly profiled in Alla Kov-gan's documentary, through recrea-tions of his landmark works and archival footage. 2019.
19:15 Icons Unearthed: Marvel - Ep.5 Eight part documentary series. Cast, crew, and experts reveal never-before-heard stories about the Marvel Cinematic Universe and its most iconic film and television series of all time. 2023

20:00 Citizen K - 1 Accusing Moshe Kastel of double murder led to a heavy punishment, the 3 part series documents the reopening of the case and reveals details that can testify to his innocence. Dir. Alon Marom. Israel, 2018.
21:00 Dvar Hatviaa: 1
21:35 Deadlocked Ep.1 "Dead-locked: How America Shaped the Supreme Court". Documentary mini-series follow the modern history of the Supreme Court, the deci-sions and battles that have shaped the US. 2023
22:31 Dvar Hatviaa: 1
23:10 A Case of a Lifetime - 1 (part 1) The double murder affair that shook Israel. Shmuel Bleichman informed the police that his mother and sister had disappeared. In the interrogation, the son testified, and his father was convicted. Dir.Nili Tal. 2018.
23:55 A Case of a Lifetime - 1 (part 2) The double murder affair that shook Israel. Shmuel Bleichman informed the police that his mother and sister had disappeared. In the interrogation, the son testified, and his father was convicted. Dir.Nili Tal. 2018.
00:00 Mr. Saturday Night Film tells the tale of Robert Siggwood, the music executive behind the Bee Gees, whose work on films Grease and Saturday Night Fever made him one of the most decorated impresario's of the disco era. Dir. John Maggio. 2021

CHANNEL 8 (H8)

06:02 Sirius
06:50 The Avoidable War
07:58 Strangest things 2
08:48 The Round Number
09:53 Born to be king
10:43 Air force during Yom Kippur
11:52 Sirius
12:41 Strangest things 2
13:31 The Round Number
14:36 Born to be king
15:26 Air force during Yom Kippur
16:35 Sirius
17:24 Born to be king
18:14 The Round Number
19:19 Air force during Yom Kippur
20:28 Strangest things 2
21:15 Quad Gods
22:16 Sirius
23:01 30 Greatest Moments: Adele
00:36 Quad Gods
01:41 Sirius
02:30 30 Greatest Moments: Adele

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC (Y41/H46)

06:15 Ice Road Rescue 7 - 7. Win-ter's Payback
07:00 Goldfathers - 3. Gold Bust
07:47 Wicked Tuna: Outer Banks Showdown - 9, B
08:31 Air Crash Investigation 17 - 5. Deadly D
09:17 Air Crash Investigation 17 - 6. Deadly M
10:03 Drain the Oceans: Deep Dive - 3. Sunken
10:50 Ice Road Rescue 7 - 8. Police Hold-Up
11:36 Goldfathers - 4. The Road to Riches
12:23 Wicked Tuna: Outer Banks Showdown - 10.
13:07 Primal Survivor: Mighty Mekong - 5. Last Stand
13:53 Criminal Ramsay: Uncharted 1 - 3. The Migh
14:42 Running Wild With Bear Gryl-s 5 - 6. Day
15:31 Air Crash Investigation 17 - 7. Free Fall
16:17 Air Crash Investigation 17 - 8. Deadly I
17:03 Car S.O.S. 9 - 11. Bond Bug
17:49 Science of Stupid 7 - Episode 11
18:13 Science of Stupid 7 - Episode 12
18:38 Drain the Oceans: Deep Dive - 4. Stormy
19:24 Brain Games 4 - 3. Common Sense
19:48 Brain Games 4 - 5. Left vs Right
20:12 Construction Fails - Episode 4
21:03 Megastructures - 23. Airbus A380
21:52 Ultimate Supercar: Compila-tion Season 2
22:36 Supercar Megabuild - 7. Jeep Wrangler
23:23 Construction Fails - Episode 4
00:05 Life Below Zero: Next Genera-tion 7 - 5.
00:49 First Alaskans: Season 3 - 10. Precious
01:33 Dead End Express - 4. Grizzly Goner

MEZZO FULL (H195)

10:33 InterMezzo A selection of short musical clips and artmusic - enjoy a variety of genres from Jazz to Classical music.
11:00 Bernard Haitink - It Comes My Way Documentary. Together with Hans Hafmanns - a Dutch radio and TV presenter, conductor Bern-ard Haitink is reflecting on his long career. An interview interwoven with unique archival footage. 2019.
11:49 Bernard Haitink: Mahler's 3rd
11:49 Classical. Berliner Philhar-moniker, Bernard Haitink (conduc-tor): Mahler's symphony no. 3, in D minor. With: Florence Quivar (alto), Tolzer Knabenchor, Ernst Senff Chor. Philharmonie, Berlin, 1992.
13:36 InterMezzo A selection of short musical clips and artmusic - enjoy a variety of genres from Jazz to Classical music.
14:30 Tanz Linz: Sleeping Beauty Tanz Linz performs The Sleeping Beauty with choreography by Andrey Kaydanovskiy. Landesthe-ater, Linz, 2024.
15:45 Marie Van Rhijn: Vivaldi, Pergo-lesi Orchestre de l'Opera Royal, Marie Van Rhijn (organ and musical direction), Filippo Miniccia and Samuel Marino (countertenors) per-form works by Vivaldi and Pergolesi. Chateau de Versailles, 2020.
17:11 Bloch, Piemontesi: Mozart, Schumann Orchestre national de Lille and Francesco Piemontesi (piano) led by Alexandre Bloch perform Mozart's Don Giovanni. Over-ture, and Schumann's Piano Con-certo in A minor op. 54. Lille, 2022.
17:52 Speranza Scappucci Con-ducts Beethoven Orchestre National d'Ile-de-France led by Speranza Scappucci performs Beethoven's Fidelio, Overture Op. 72, and Sym-phony No. 3 in E flat major, Op. 55 "Eroica" (Alfortville, 2020).
18:52 InterMezzo A selection of short musical clips and artmusic - enjoy a variety of genres from Jazz to Classical music.
19:10 Berlioz: La Damnation de Faust Opera in 4 acts. Monte-Carlo Opera Chorus, Rainer III Music Academy Children's Chorus, and Monte-Carlo Philharmonic Orches-tra led by Kazuki Yamada. Aude Extremo (Marguerite), Pene Pati (Faust). 2022.
21:30 Sun Ra Arkestra - Lugano Jazz Festival Sun Ra Arkestra per-forms at Lugano Jazz Festival, 1985.
22:16 Manu Dibango - Lugano

Jazz Estival Manu Dibango accom-panied by Michael Aido, Jean Pierre Coco, Elie Longue, Maria Lovens-osso, Valerie Lobe, Michel Male-cani, Adria Marabona, Florence Titti, Brice Wonanga, Fletti Sina. Lu-gano, 1983.
23:26 Franco Ambrosetti Quintet - Estival Jazz Franco Ambrosetti (Sax-ophone), George Gruntz (piano), Steve Coleman (saxophone), J.F Clark (bass), and Daniel Humair (drums) perform at Estival Jazz, Lugano, Switzerland, 1985.
00:20 Matthias Goerne: Winterreise by Schubert Schubert: Winterreise. Matthias Goerne (baritone), Markus Hinterhäuser (Piano), Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, 2014.
01:41 Cecilia Bartoli - Mission Clas-sical.
02:42 InterMezzo A selection of short musical clips and artmusic - enjoy a variety of genres from Jazz to Classical music.
04:00 Grigory Sokolov: Schumann, Chopin Classical. Grigory Sokolov (piano) plays Schumann (Four Fugues, op. 72; Bunte Blatter, op. 99) and Chopin (Polonaises, op. 26; 1 Allegro Op. 29; 2 Maestoso). Palais des Nations, Geneva, 2020.
05:38 Hannu Lintu: Debussy, Man-tovani Classical. Hannu Lintu and The Lausanne Chamber Orchestra perform Debussy's Danses sacree et profane for harp and string orches-tra, Mantovani's Danse libre and Schumann's Symphony no. 1.

MOVIES

HOT CINEMA 1 (H16)

06:01 The Mercy The incredible story of amateur sailor Donald Crowhurst and his solo attempt to circumnavigate the globe. Cast: Colin Firth, Rachel Weisz. Dir.: James Marsh (UK, 2018).
07:43 Pele Pele's megalomaniac rise from the slums of Sao Paulo to lead-ing Brazil to its first World Cup vic-tory. Cast: Vincent D'Onofrio, Adriano Aragon. Dir.: Jeff Zimbalist (USA, 2016).
09:30 Horizon Line Thriller. A couple flying on a small plane must fight for their lives after their pilot suffers a heart attack. Cast: Allison Williams, Alexander Dreyfuss. Dir.: Mikael Marcimain (USA, 2020).
11:03 Dark Waters Drama. A cor-porate defense attorney takes on an environmental lawsuit against a chemical company that exposes a history of pollution. Cast: Mark Ruf-alo, Anne Hathaway. Dir.: Todd Haynes (USA, 2019).
13:09 In the Heart of the Sea A recounting of a New England whal-ling ship's sinking caused by a giant whale in 1820, an event that later inspired the novel "Moby-Dick." With Chris Hemsworth, Cillian Mur-phy. Dir: Ron Howard. (2015)
15:10 Beautiful Boy The heart-breaking and inspiring story of sur-vival, relapse and recovery in a family coping with addiction over many years. Cast: Steve Carell, Timothe

An expertly crafted horror thriller



MAIKA MONROE stars in 'Longlegs.' (Neon/TNS)

FILM REVIEW
• By KATIE WALSH

oz Perkins's eerie, occultist serial killer horror thriller *Longlegs* opens with a psyche-rattling sequence, barely a minute or two long, in which he crafts a chilling sense of shock, awe, and confounding humor simply through shot composition, editing, and performance. It unsettles the viewer on a bone-deep level, the tension then bursting like a bubble on a bravura music cue.

It is scary, only because of how it is presented formally, not necessarily thanks to any of the basic actions or imagery on screen, and it is thrilling, because Perkins announces from the outset his audacious

approach to tone as well as his mastery of cinematic technique to create suspense. The tension never lets up throughout *Longlegs*, though it is peppered with a dry, black humor that somehow just makes everything more disturbing. One should know as little as possible about *Longlegs* for the best viewing experience: in fact, feel free to stop reading now if experiencing an entirely unpredictable plot and the sensation of sickening dread mixed with bleak humor for 100 minutes sounds like an appealing cinematic experience (it is). But we shall proceed here, because *Longlegs* is just too rich a text to unpack, and the obstacle course of writing around its true horrors is a worthy challenge.

Though it's a facile comparison, *Longlegs* feels like Perkins's *The Silence of the Lambs*, in that it follows a young female FBI agent as she plays cat and mouse with a serial killer (there's also a shared enthusiasm for British '70s rock on behalf of our respective boogymen). Special Agent Lee Harker (Maika Monroe) has the preternatural skill and drive of Clarice Starling, and both characters similarly fail to mask their vulnerability with toughness, though in different ways. Harker's not a people person but she is highly intuitive, perhaps even a little bit psychic. She's recruited by Special Agent Carter (Blair Underwood) for precisely that quality, to start reinvestigating the cold case

of a series of possibly related family annihilations wherein a person named *Longlegs* has claimed a kind of responsibility through coded notes. As she dives deeper into research, it's revealed that Harker is strangely connected to these cases (is she psychic or are these memories?). Nicolas Cage plays a strange suspect in one of his more outre and unrecognizable performances. He is brilliant and clearly having a blast committing wholeheartedly to his wacky and terrifying choices (though Cage has never not committed above and beyond in every performance). Alicia Witt also appears as Harker's mother, with whom the agent has a close, but complicated, relationship. Monroe,

with a sort of placid sullenness, is the eye of the storm of these colorful characters, including her bombastic boss Carter. The performances work in tandem with the astonishingly meticulous and precise filmmaking. Perkins (who is the son of *Psycho* star Anthony Perkins) has a marvelously methodical eye in crafting cinematic image and sound. With cinematographer Andres Arochi, who works magic with the structure of light, Perkins centers Harker in carefully composed shots where she is dwarfed by the environment, emphasizing her smallness and sense of overwhelm. The camera switches between objective observation of our protagonist, and alignment with her intuitive point

of view and actions. Slow, creeping zooms mimic her vision, and backwards tracking shots continuously drag her into danger, her gun always in hand. The camera bears an omniscient, ominous knowingness that can't always be trusted, but repeated shots and scenarios suggest connection and comparison between different characters and across time, so there is an internal rhythm to the filmmaking even as the story defies traditional kinds of logic. *Longlegs* is also a masterpiece of production design (by Danny Vermette) and set decoration (by Trevor Johnston) that suggests a time and place (mid-1990s, mid-Atlantic) and fills in that world with

pertinent visual information. Perkins also fills the cast with interesting and memorable supporting roles that make the world of *Longlegs* bigger, richer and weirder, and helps us to understand the characters further, seeing how they interact with the world around them. However, *Longlegs* does not offer up easy answers about itself on a macro level. Watching it feels like a riddle, the film itself a code to crack, and by the time it's done, the whole puzzle has not yet been revealed. That's OK. Understanding everything is not the point in a film that offers such a delicious roller-coaster ride of bad vibes. Just jump on board and let Perkins guide the way – the journey is more than worth it. (TNS)

OPERA REVIEW



THE ISRAELI OPERA'S production of 'Rigoletto.' (Yossi Zvecker)

A thought-provoking 'Rigoletto'

Verdi *Rigoletto*
Israeli Opera, Tel Aviv, July 7

• By LIRAN GURKIEWICZ

The Israeli Opera is ending its current season with a new controversial production of Verdi's *Rigoletto*, which premiered in Tel Aviv on July 7. Beforehand, the production's well-respected Spanish director, Miguel del Arco, expressed doubts about accompanying his set to Israel.

"I haven't decided yet. We are thinking about whether we should go to a country that is responsible for a horrible genocide against the Palestinian people," he was quoted as saying in Spanish media. Well, del Arco did not attend the Opera's premiere, and the helm was given to Regina Alexandrovskaya.

Presumably, del Arco's production is a manifesto against masculine entitlements of privileged males and their manipulation of women. And so, all the men are in lavish and privileged fur tuxedos, often with bunny masks to disguise their deeds.

It is not a period set; the production is set in contemporary times. On the proscenium stage hang luxurious red drapes and modern chandeliers, but other than that, the stage is usually rather empty. Gilda's house is presented as a garden; the decor is made of other-worldly, balloon-like shapes, covered in black cloth, designed to endow the audience with the idea that things are not what they are, the underlying fallacy of the love narrative.

Overall, the cast is impressive: Hilla Fahima is a talented actress and singer, although initially, it appears that she is trying to hit the right note or pitch. This comes at the expense of the legato singing in Bel canto. In the 2nd act and later, her performance is remarkable, with a flowing, natural Bel canto.

Ionut Pascu as Rigoletto is phenomenal – a wonderful singer and an unusually talented actor able to convey the character. Even without the hunched back, in a suit and a long black coat, he is still a miserable wretch, limping and singing his parts full blown to the audience.

Oreste Cosimo as the Duke is a good singer but still lacking stage presence and vocal strength. Petros Magoulas as Sparafucule the assassin and Shay Bloch as his daughter Maddalena give an impressive performance with dramatic stage presence, even if the singing is not as loud and clear as it should be.

It is a thought-provoking production, and the costumes, acting, and singing of Verdi's inspirational music all combine for a memorable experience.

Summer camp for choreographers

• By ORI J. LENKINSKI

Although summer camp is traditionally reserved for the young, adults have as much need for rest, relaxation, and a break from routine as children.

This was part of the thinking behind the International Choreographers Retreat held last month in Quebec. Organized by Jerusalem-based C.A.T.A.M.O.N. Dance Group, together with Montreal Danse, the event hosted 26 artists from around the globe in a remote, scenic location, for six days of personal and professional bonding. The effects, as one of the attendees explained, had much of the magic and mystic of summer camp.

"We became like kids," said Claudia Lavista, who traveled to Canada from her home base in Mexico City. Joining her were 25 additional artists, including Brian Brooks from New York City, Silvana Pombal from Mozambique, and Japanese choreographer Rianto.

"It was a very interesting, embodied cultural exchange. We were dancing together the dances we do in our own countries, doing the practices from our own countries. Each person was a window to a whole universe," Lavista observed.

"We were having fun – making fires, kayaking, and taking walks in the woods. We told each other jokes. One day, we



ATTENDEES OF the International Choreographers Retreat in Quebec, Canada, organized by Jerusalem-based C.A.T.A.M.O.N. Dance Group together with Montreal Danse. (Elad Shechter)

were kayaking and it started to rain and we got soaked. It was so much fun. It was all about encounters, reflection, dialogue, building bridges, falling in love, recognizing one another – not as artists but as human beings."

Lavista, 55, first heard about the retreat in 2022, when she spent three months as a Jerusalem International Fellow. "We were four fellows, each with our own hosting organization," explained Lavista. C.A.T.A.M.O.N. Dance Group was her hosting organization during that time. While in Jerusalem, Lavista took in the city, made two creations,

and became friends with Elad Shechter, C.A.T.A.M.O.N.'s founder and director.

"My luck was that Elad hosted me and we became close. He was imagining this retreat and wanted it to be a place to rest. Dance makers are so busy all the time, not only making work and practicing, [but dealing with] public relationships; it's so exhausting. We need a place to rest. In a way, the retreat was a place to rest but also a place to reflect. We were able to reflect because we were relaxed."

HOWEVER, ARRIVING at this level of relaxation required years of planning on Shech-

ter and C.A.T.A.M.O.N.'s part, including major adjustments leading up to the meeting. In September of 2023, having secured ample funds from both Canadian and Israeli sources, Shechter believed he was just months away from realizing his vision. Then, in October, it was clear the retreat would have to undergo some changes.

A small group of artists dropped out due to the political unrest in Israel. Several others voiced concern about participating in an event funded by the Israeli government. Shechter, thinking quickly and moving faster, found alternate funders. Finally, in June 2024, the artists and staff flew to Montreal. Shechter shared that the days leading up were peppered with trepidation and worries that the political situation would negatively impact the artists' ability to connect with one another. What ended up happening was the opposite.

"The artists came from very different cultures and contexts," Shechter said. "Once we were together, we realized that everyone had their own issues and backgrounds. Everyone was there to share and get to know one another and the meeting took on a very peaceful tone."

For those six days, in a retreat center overlooking a lake and woods, the artists put aside resumes and self-promotion in favor of broaching issues facing dance as an art form globally. They brainstormed, shared practices, and contemplated how to create such meetings in their communities back home. Lavista saw the retreat as the beginning of a new kind of activity in the dance world.

"It was an encounter between people who are trying to make art and putting dance at the center of the discussion. The youngest participant was around 29 and the more mature was around 62. So, the moments we are at in our careers were very different."

montrealdanse.com/en/retreats/2024/

Israeli series, 'A Body That Works', hits Netflix top 10 all over the world

• By HANNAH BROWN

A Body That Works, the new series from Keshet International about a Tel Aviv couple (Rotem Sela and Yehuda Levi) who can't have a baby and hire a surrogate (Gal Malka), is certainly working for Netflix, which is streaming the series around the world. On Tuesday, Netflix announced that the series is in the top 10 in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, France, Germany, Italy, Mexico, Poland, and Romania, among other countries. The series became available on the platform less than a month ago, in the orig-

inal Hebrew version, and it also stars Lior Raz of *Fauda* as a work colleague of the character played by Sela.

The series made headlines in 2023 when its two lead actresses, Sela and Malka, shared the Best Actress Award in the International Panorama competition at the prestigious Series Mania competition in France. It was created by Shira Hadad and Dror Mishani (both of whom collaborated on the series *Wisdom of the Crowd*) and Shay Capon (*Dumb*), who also directed the series.

Other Israeli series, such as *Fauda*, have performed well on

Netflix internationally, with the third season consistently hitting the top 10 worldwide, including in Arab countries like Lebanon. At one point in 2023, four seasons of the series were in Lebanon's Netflix top 10, including the recently released fourth season, which was in second place on the list. The series, which features about half of its dialogue in Arabic, is about an Israeli counterterrorism unit operating in the West Bank, Gaza, Lebanon, and Europe.

Shtisel, a series about an ultra-Orthodox family in Jerusalem, has also been popular on Netflix.



POPULAR – KESHET International's 'A Body That Works.' (Keshet 12)*