



ISRAEL NEWS

*A collection of the week's news from Israel
From the Bet El Twinning / Israel Action Committee of
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enabled those crimes. Yet the Times and others who echo their stand seek to avoid discussing the causes of the surge in hate crimes. They seem to treat the vast increase in such incidents as if they were merely the work of a few troubled individuals.

Commentary...

What's the Best Answer to Anti-Semitic Attacks? There's More Than One By Jonathan S. Tobin

In the aftermath of the atrocious stabbing attack in Monsey, N.Y., the mainstream Jewish community seems to have woken up to its duty to speak out in defense of their fellow Jews. The muted response to a yearlong surge of anti-Semitic attacks on Chassidic Jews in the greater New York area on the part of leading Jewish groups and others from the non-Orthodox organized Jewish world has given way to appropriate expressions of anger, sympathy and solidarity. Indeed, when even the editorial page of The New York Times is urging residents of the city to "March Against Anti-Semitism," then perhaps a turning point has been reached.

The jury is still out as to whether the interest of the organized Jewish world and elements of the media like the Times will be content with empty gestures and then move on. It remains to be seen whether anti-Semitism directed at people who don't dress or pray in the same manner as most American Jews and which doesn't advance their preferred partisan narrative about Jew-hatred (President Donald Trump can't be credibly blamed for this) will be sustained over time. But for now, the increased sense of unity is to be applauded, even if it took terrible crimes like the shooting at a kosher supermarket in Jersey City and now the Monsey Hanukkah attack to make it happen.

But unfortunately, this attention has brought with it the same kind of divisiveness that is an integral part of how Americans react to all notorious violent crimes. Every mass shooting or incident is inevitably followed by advocacy for more gun-control measures, whether or not more such laws would have prevented the crime. At the same time—and with far less support from the mass media—backers of gun rights claim that the solution is putting more guns in the hands of good guys. Such discussions are, like so much else these days, so polarized that even calls for "thoughts and prayers" for victims are now mocked as attempts to divert the public from a serious discussion of the issues.

Sadly, the same dialogue of the deaf is playing out with respect to the surge of anti-Semitic attacks on ultra-Orthodox Jews in New York. Advocates of Jewish self-defense are calling for those at risk to arm themselves, while opponents of the spread of firearms are horrified by the thought of a religious community turning to weapons to assure their security. They would prefer to rely on prayer, maintaining good relations with their neighbors, and cultivating the good will of friendly politicians and local law enforcement.

What's more, some echo the Times, whose commendable call for a march against anti-Semitism was accompanied by a steadfast refusal to consider that the hatred simmering among attackers is connected to the vitriol against Jews that is being spread by leftist proponents of intersectional theories, as well as by hatemongers like the Nation of Islam's Louis Farrakhan, with disproportionate influence in the African-American community.

Those who caution against turning this into tribal warfare are right. What has happened is not something supported by the vast majority of African-Americans; attempts to imply anything of the sort will only make the problem worse. Maintaining and expanding efforts to bring the black and Jewish communities together are essential to dealing with the violence, as well as the right thing to do.

But the same Times' editorial that called upon citizens to march against anti-Semitism also urged that the stepped-up police patrols of Orthodox neighborhoods in Brooklyn be eventually discontinued, lest they be perceived as a threat to blacks. The same sort of spirit of avoidance seems to animate those who decry anti-Semitism, though still organized (as was the case in Brooklyn) a solidarity rally at which a notorious anti-Semite like Linda Sarsour was welcomed.

Many on the left take it as a matter of faith that white supremacists are encouraged to attack Jews by dog whistling from Trump, even if he has repeatedly condemned anti-Semitism and is the greatest supporter of Israel ever to sit in the White House. No matter how isolated or radical right-wing extremists may be, it is assumed that he

Gestures such as the planned march across the Brooklyn Bridge on Sunday, Jan. 5, are important. Yet if the people who are spreading anti-Semitism, such as Farrakhan and the peddlers of intersectional libels against Jews and Israel, aren't directly condemned, then all these activities are doing is sending the moral equivalent of "thoughts and prayers" that so many disparage in other contexts. And pointing this out isn't politicizing this problem; it's calling attention to what must change if this threat is to be contained.

The smart response to these crimes isn't limited to a single tactic. More security, including the sort of armed and trained volunteers who saved lives at a mass shooting in a Texas church this past weekend, are needed. But greater efforts to bridge the divide between blacks and Jews, and persuading politicians to do the right thing, are also important. And anyone who disparages the efficacy of prayer and Jewish religious study is also wrong, though the history of relying on sacred activities without also taking other sensible steps to promote the defense of the Jews is not encouraging.

The real lesson to be learned here is to stop treating any number of sensible measures as if they were mutually exclusive, and to avoid meaningless gestures that are disconnected from and seek to avoid discussing the root cause of these crimes. If American Jews can avoid those pitfalls, then perhaps this shift towards more solidarity with the ultra-Orthodox community that is at risk won't be as fleeting as cynics may be inclined to believe. (JNS Jan 2)

Despicable: Black Attacks on Jews are Rooted in Democrats' Coddling of Anti-Semites By Monica Showalter

Once-tolerant New York City is becoming a haven for anti-Semitic, Jew-hating attacks, getting to be like Paris, eventually driving Jewish flight based on the surge of unpunished violence in the leftist-run city.

It's shocking, not only because the number of unprovoked attacks on Jewish people just minding their own business and going about their daily lives are very numerous -- nine at last count within about a week -- but because within the violence itself is a tissue of lies, explicit and implicit, from silky enablers to conceal and euphemize what's really happening. In every case, the victim was Jewish and the attacker was black. That's a politically incorrect to the press and its leftist allies, but it's true. It's similar to how Islamist terror was covered up as 'workplace violence' in the past, again in the name of political correctness. But this time, the refusal to name the source of the violence is not related to Middle East politics so much as Democrats' coddling of black anti-Semitism within its own ranks. Here's just one of such incidents:

Suspects arrested in last week's spree of eight anti-Semitic attacks are being quickly released right back into the neighborhoods they terrorized thanks to "bail reform" legislation — which doesn't even take effect until Jan. 1.

The most recent case of revolving-door justice came Saturday morning, with the release, with no bail, of a woman charged with punching and cursing at three Orthodox women, ages 22, 26 and 31, in Crown Heights, Brooklyn at dawn the day before.

The accused assailant, Tiffany Harris, was hauled in handcuffs before a Brooklyn judge on 21 menacing, harassment and attempted assault charges.

"F-U, Jews!" Harris, 30, of Flatbush, allegedly shouted during the attack.

"Yes, I was there," Harris later admitted to cops, according to the criminal complaint against her.

"Yes, I slapped them. I cursed them out. I said 'F-U, Jews.'"

This person got let out? That was an assault, and not just an assault, a hate-crime motivated assault that's likely to lead to another.

Here's an even more sickening attack that followed:

A knife-wielding assailant stabbed four people in a rabbi's basement synagogue in Rockland County during a crowded Hanukkah celebration Saturday night, according to a law

enforcement source.

The suspect fled the scene in a 2015 Nissan Sentra, driving over the George Washington Bridge into Manhattan — and was promptly arrested by the NYPD at 144th Street and Seventh Avenue in Harlem at midnight, the source said.

The Jewish people were celebrating their sacred and joyful holiday as a community in a place of worship and this horrible person desecrated that gathering, same as a depraved terrorist would, seeking to inflict maximum pain on Jews by invading their sacred space. Does this violent criminal get let out, too? Under lefty rules, he probably will, something the terrorists never managed to get away with.

Here's another in nearby Jersey City from two weeks ago:

The Black Hebrew Israelites are known for their inflammatory sidewalk ministers who employ provocation as a form of gospel, preaching a theology that says the chosen ones are black, Native American and Hispanic people.

Now, it has emerged that one of the two suspects in Tuesday's attack on a kosher market in Jersey City that ended with the death of six people, including a police officer, appears to have been connected to the group, a law enforcement official said.

That suspect, David N. Anderson, 47, was killed inside the JC Kosher Supermarket, along with the second suspect, Francine Graham, 50, officials said. Mr. Anderson, the law enforcement official said, had posted anti-Semitic and anti-police screeds on internet forums in the past.

Why are these insane and brazenly outrageous attacks on Jews by black groups, organized and unorganized, happening all of a sudden? Jewish people have historically been black people's strongest champions, working hand in hand during the Civil Rights era. Now there's this sick stuff redolent of the Islamist terror attacks of the rest of the world.

It's likely related to the left's denial of any recognition of a pattern of hate-motivated black attacks on Jews in New York. Dov Hikind, a New York state assemblyman, told Fox that every perpetrator seen on the videos was black. That's inconvenient for the left, which holds out all black people as victims, not perpetrators, which some undoubtedly are. Mayor Bill De Blasio, and Gov. Andrew Cuomo seems to be in denial about this, they both visited the attacked synagogue and said the right things about condemning anti-Semitism, but neither brought up that there was a problem somewhere in the black community where the problem originated.

Calling out and identifying the perpetrators, of course, would take courage, because leftists and advocates for anti-Semitism would likely blast the effort as a racist condemnation of all black people, something that would be sure to scare people like De Blasio and Cuomo away. But not identifying the problem where it is is denial, something that will ensure that the problem never stops. We all know how long it took to end the war on terror based on the amazing capacity for officials to refuse to deny that Islamist fundamentalism was at the root of the terrorist problem. It's likely going to be worse with these perpetrators given that they can hide behind untouchable 'victim' status and have all the Democratic establishment right there to their defense.

Why is that? Because Democrats have been coddling black anti-Semites for years. Where's the Democratic condemnation for race huckster Rev. Al Sharpton, who's also a notorious anti-Semite with a long record of incitement of violence against Jews? Right there in the berth of the Democratic Party, still supposedly representing the black "middle class."

Where's the Democrats' condemnation for Louis Farrakhan, whose animating breath is all about anti-Semitism? Hobnobbing with Democrats in photos, appearing with Bill Clinton at Aretha Franklin's funeral, and tweeting "sweetheart" dreck with fellow anti-Semite, Democratic Rep. Ilhan Omar. Where, for that matter, is the Democratic condemnation of Rep. Ilhan Omar's anti-Semitism? They couldn't pass a simple resolution against her in the House after her string of whoppers. They were too afraid to lay a hand on her, despite her long record of anti-Semitic statements. It's coddling all right, and you can bet the more aggressive street predator class of black cultists, such as "Black Hebrew Israelites" a known anti-Semitic black group, and Jew-haters in the boroughs noticed the pattern, took note, and launched their reign of terror.

Still no recognition of the problem from Democrats, though. They prefer to call it the bad deeds of individuals and then let them off lightly. That's a recipe of worse to come. Jewish people will eventually notice that New York is now as hostile as Paris now because nobody's identifying the problem. When the heck are the Democrats going to

seriously sever ties with these groups instead of embrace them? Right now, a critical mass seems to have been reached and these sick attacks are the result. (American Thinker Dec 29)

Rockets and Booby-Trapped Balloons in the Name of Peace?

By Ron Machol

Middle Eastern terrorist organizations recruiting in the United States are growing more brazen. The recruitment is now done publicly, and includes both the soliciting of financial contributions and U.S. university students being brought to the Middle East to learn from members of terrorist groups.

In Israel's Strategic Affairs Ministry's 2018 report, "Terrorists in Suits," clear evidence is provided that the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement shares decision makers and financiers with a number of U.S.-designated terrorist organizations. Their goals are the same, their funders are the same, their executives are the same—terrorist organizations and the BDS movement are working in tandem to achieve a world without Israel as the homeland of the Jewish people.

BDS is far from being the only such group operating in the United States. For example, a lawsuit was filed in November 2019 by KKL-JNF and Americans living in Israel against U.S. Campaign for Palestinian Rights (USCPR), alleging that USCPR is funneling money donated by Americans to designated terrorist organizations such as Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

On their website, USCPR maintains that it is a "national coalition of hundreds of groups working together for freedom, justice, and equality." However, this doesn't seem to apply to those living in Israel: The lawsuit claims that charitable contributions to USCPR are being transferred to the same terrorist groups that have been indiscriminately firing missiles into Israel for many years.

In the hands of recipients of financial support from this self-proclaimed civil rights group, balloons and kites equipped with incendiary devices are launched towards Israel from the Gaza Strip with the express purpose of damaging the environment. There are documented cases in which these kites are first colorfully decorated by Gaza school children before being launched. And the results are tragic—almost 9,000 acres of Israeli farms, forests and nature reserves have been destroyed.

In another example, pro-Palestinian advocacy group Eyewitness Palestine was on Duke University's campus in 2019 during "Israel Apartheid Week," recruiting students to join one of their delegations to Palestine. The idea was that the students would then return home and advocate for the Palestinian cause.

Similar to USCPR, Eyewitness Palestine describes itself as an "organization seeking peace for all in the Middle East." They choose not to publicize the fact that some of the meetings they arrange for these American university students are with members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), a U.S.-designated terrorist organization responsible for killing hundreds of Israelis.

The Department of Education is concerned enough about terrorism's impact on U.S. campuses that it has opened an investigation into a number of universities to determine whether they are ensuring that the hundreds of millions of dollars they receive from oil-rich Qatar do not originate from sources that provide material support for "specially designated global terrorism."

This is no dry academic subject, relevant only for politicians and lawyers. In November, some 560 rockets and mortars were fired into Israel from the Gaza Strip over a two-day period by Palestinian Islamic Jihad, one of the terrorist partners that receives money from USCPR. Many of these rockets targeted towns in southern Israel, including where my son is stationed. When a rocket is fired at such close range (a few miles), people in the area have about five seconds from the time they hear the sirens to reach cover. My family and I live about 20 miles from the Gaza Strip, so we have about 45 seconds to get to cover.

My son escaped injury in November—but a few months prior he sustained shrapnel wounds from a Gazan missile.

Terrorist organizations have become savvier, using human rights slogans and even children's toys to portray themselves in a positive light. We can't let our guard down, lest we be tricked into sympathizing and even supporting terrorism. (JNS Jan 1)

The writer is the COO of Zachor Legal Institute, an organization using the law to combat anti-Semitism.

Why President Trump is Keeping the Promise Made at San Remo in 1920

By Eugene Kontorovich

A full century after the international community met in Paris and San Remo to establish a post-imperial world order founded on independent nation states, the international community has, under the leadership of US President Donald Trump, begun to fully implement the promises and undertakings they made then.

At San Remo, the Jews were promised a “national home” in Palestine, and an explicit right to “settle” throughout the territory, which included Judea and Samaria. The international community did nothing to implement this promise, or ensure its fulfillment in the face of reluctance by the Mandatory government and growing anti-immigrant xenophobia by local Arabs. It was left entirely up to the Jews to translate the international promises into facts on the ground, and in 1948 they partially did so, though with much of the territory, including the holy sites, falling to the Jordanians.

After Israel retook these territories in 1967, much of the international community pretended its earlier guarantees did not exist. Far from allowing Jewish “settlement,” they claim that the areas Jordan ethnically cleansed of Jews in 1948 must indefinitely remain Jew-free zones, policed by Israel to prevent any Hebraic infiltration.

Yet 100 years after the Paris Conference, a leader emerged who was prepared to actualize the commitments the League of Nations had then made. President Trump’s recognition of a united Jerusalem, and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo’s conclusion that Jewish communities in Judea and Samaria are not war crimes represent a proper understanding of the legal significance of the League of Nations Mandate. More importantly, they are perhaps the first leaders who refuse to subordinate Israel’s legal rights to political blackmail from Arab states.

The post-World War I peace arrangements, begun in Paris in 1919 and culminating in San Remo the following year, gave rise to the states of Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan and Israel, as well as the borders of those countries and all of their neighbors.

It is easy to criticize the artificiality of the countries established by the League of Nations. But in a world, and particularly a region, where ethnic and religious groups live intermixed and not separated into grid-like boxes, some arbitrariness of borders is inevitable. Every League of Nations-mandated territory lumped an unhappy minority in with a majority: the Muslims in with Lebanon’s Christians, the Kurds with Iraq’s Arabs, everyone with everyone in Syria. The process was imperfect, but the known alternatives are what existed before – a vast pan-ethnic empire – or every group trying to carve out its own sliver of territory, which ends up looking like Syria over the past eight years.

This is why the post-World War I borders are overwhelmingly accepted as the binding sovereign borders of the countries that arose in the British Mandatory territories. Both Kurdish secession and Syrian annexation of Lebanon get no international support because they would call into question Mandatory borders.

There is one place in the Middle East where the international community takes the entirely opposite position about Mandatory borders. And that, of course, is Israel.

While the Pompeo statement did not say anything about borders, it did reclaim the San Remo principle that Jewish settlement is not illegal. The legal basis for this deserves some discussion.

Pompeo repudiated the conclusions of a 1978 memorandum by the State Department legal advisor Herbert Hansell. The memo’s conclusions had already been rejected by then-president Ronald Reagan, but it had never been formally retracted.

The four-page memo jumped in broad strokes across major issues, and cited no precedent for its major conclusions. Indeed, in the decades since, its legal analysis of occupation and settlements has consistently not been applied by the US, or other nations, to any other comparable geopolitical facts. It was always what lawyers call a “one-ride ticket” applicable just for Israel.

Hansell’s memo had two analytic steps. First, he concluded that Israel was an “occupying power” in the West Bank. That triggers the application of the Geneva Conventions. He then invoked an obscure provision of the Fourth Geneva Convention that had never been applied to any other situation before (or since). It says the “occupying power shall not deport or transfer its civilian population” into the territory it occupies.

Hansell, without much discussion, concluded that Jews who move just over the Green Line have somehow been “deported or transferred” there by the State of Israel. In short, he read a prohibition on Turkish-style population transfer schemes as requirement that Israel

permanently prevent its Jews from living in those areas that Jordan had ethnically cleansed during its administration.

Under international law, occupation occurs when a country takes over territory that is under the sovereignty of another country. This is why borders of countries arising in former Mandatory territories are those of the relevant Mandate. That, for example, is why Russia is considered an occupying power in Crimea, even though most of its population is Russian and it has historically been part of Russia. Yet due to internal Soviet reallocations, when Ukraine became independent, Crimea was incorporated into the borders of its predecessor, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. For international law, this establishes clear Ukrainian sovereignty, even over the self-determination objections of a local ethnic majority.

BUT THE West Bank was never part of Jordan. To the contrary, it was territory that Jordan itself had seized in 1949.

Moreover, a country cannot occupy territory to which it has sovereign title. Israel has the strongest sovereign claim to the territory. In international law, a new country inherits the borders of the prior geopolitical unit in that territory. In this case, that unit was the League of Nations Mandate for Palestine. Hansell’s memo fails to even discuss this globally-applied principle for determining borders.

The Hansell memo also failed the test of history and of generalizability. The State Department has not applied its definition of “occupation” to Moroccan-controlled Western Sahara, Dutch New Guinea, or any other situation where territory that changed hands in war did not have a clear prior sovereign.

But even by its own terms, the memo’s conclusions no longer apply. Hansell specifically stated that the state of occupation would no longer exist if Israel entered into a peace treaty with Jordan. That is because the law of occupation is part of the law of war; it has no applicability in time of peace. Jordan signed a full and unconditional peace treaty with Israel in 1994, making the memo moot.

The separate notion that an occupation creates an impermeable demographic bubble around the territory has no basis in the history or subsequent application of the Fourth Geneva Convention. In an academic study, I have shown that almost all prolonged occupations of territory since 1949 – including America’s 40-year administration of West Berlin – have seen population movement into the occupied territory. In some of these cases, like Western Sahara and Northern Cyprus, the demographic effect has been huge. In none of these cases has the US, or the UN, claimed a violation of the Geneva Conventions. (Jerusalem Post Jan 2)

Fighting Iran’s Undivided and Indivisible Regime

By Caroline Glick

This week, we saw the true face of the Iranian regime at home and abroad.

In regards to Iran, for forty years, Western policymakers have been lying to themselves about the nature of the Iranian regime and basing their Iran policies on the lies they tell themselves. The main lie has been that there is an ongoing, existential struggle for power and control within the ranks of the regime’s leadership.

On the one hand, the fantasy goes, you have the “hardliners.” They are the ones behind all the terrorism. They are the ones working to develop nuclear weapons and the warheads to deliver them. They are the ones who call out “Death to America, Death to Israel.”

Facing them are the “moderates.” If the moderates seize the reins, the Iranians will eschew terror. They will walk away from their nuclear program. And the aspiration for an Islamic global empire will become no more than a children’s fairytale.

The conceptual framework for American and Western policy relating to Iran since the 1979 revolution has been that all you need to do to end the conflict with Iran and bring it back into the family of nations is to find the right mix of concessions to enable the moderates win their power struggle against the hardliners.

On Monday, Reuters published a report about how the regime brutally repressed the countrywide protests last month that put paid this delusional notion. Based on accounts from four Iranian regime sources, Reuters reported that on November 17, the second day of the protests, when the demonstrations spread to Tehran, the demonstrators called openly for the regime to be overthrown and for the late Shah’s son Reza Pahlavi to return to Iran and lead a post-Khomeinist republic, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei held a meeting to discuss how to handle the demonstrations. It was attended by President Hassan Rouhani, several members of his

cabinet and senior security officials.

After seeing pictures of protesters burning his photo and destroying a statue of the republic's founder Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, Khamenei reportedly yelled, "The Islamic republic is in danger. Do whatever it takes to end it. You have my order."

Khamenei also said that "he would hold the assembled officials responsible for the consequences of the protests if they didn't immediately stop them."

The participants at the meeting were made to understand that "those rioters should be crushed," Reuters reported

And they were. According to Reuters' sources, within two weeks, 1,500 demonstrators, including 400 women and at least 17 teenagers were killed by regime forces.

In other words, there is no epic struggle between hardliners and moderates in Iran. The leader of the "moderates," Rouhani is just as responsible for the brutal repression of the protesters as supposed "hardliners." They were all at the meeting. They all agreed that the protests had to be brutally crushed.

Since Rouhani was first elected to the presidency in 2013, Western leaders have extolled him as the moderate we were all waiting for.

The Obama administration, together with the Europeans insisted that with Rouhani at the helm of Iran, the West could make a nuclear deal that would give the regime a glide path to a nuclear arsenal inside of a decade and \$150 billion in sanctions relief.

Even Israel's security chiefs embraced the dream. In an interview with the Times of London on the eve of his retirement from the Israel Defense Forces last January, then Chief of the General Staff Lt. Gen. Gabi Eisenkot repeated the standard talking points.

There is a "power struggle in Iran between the Revolutionary Guards faction, led by [Revolutionary Guards commander Qassem] Soleimani, who is exporting the Islamic Revolution, and the more moderate faction led by President Hassan Rouhani, who wants to invest in the tottering economy rather than wars abroad," Eisenkot insisted.

As Iran scholar Michael Ledeen wrote in response to Eisenkot's remarks, the dynamic in Iran doesn't involve "a power struggle between a radical and moderate faction. It's a rejection of regime strategy by the bulk of the Iranian people."

Thanks to the Obama administration's political, economic and military support for Iran, when President Donald Trump entered office in January 2017, Iran had effectively consolidated its control over an empire that stretched from Iran through Iraq to Syria and Lebanon. Yemen had also become an Iranian colony. With Trump's decision in May 2018 to withdraw the US from Obama's nuclear deal and reinstate US sanctions against Iran, the Trump administration began destabilizing Iran, at home and throughout its colonies. The protests, which began in Lebanon and Iraq in October and spread last month to Iran, are rooted in economic privation and dislocation fomented in large part by the US sanctions.

The regime's brutal repression of last month's protests – like its repression of the protests in Iraq where its forces and proxies have reportedly killed nearly 500 anti-Iranian demonstrators – show that in lieu of money, the Iranians – fake moderates and hardliners alike – are perfectly willing to rule through the jackboot.

The implication of this bitter, but the obvious truth is that the only goal that should guide Iran's foes – and first and foremost, Israel and the US – is the goal of overthrowing the regime. That doesn't mean that Israel or the US needs to send an invasion force into Iran tomorrow. But it does mean that all efforts in relation to Iran should have a component that destabilizes the regime both at home and throughout its empire.

This then brings us to Lebanon. This week, the mask came off in Lebanon twice. Whereas the myth that has guided Western policymaking regarding the regime in Iran has been the existence of a power struggle between moderates and hardliners, the myth relating to Lebanon has been that the government of Lebanon and the Lebanese Armed Forces are moderate actors that are independent and opposed to Iran's Lebanese proxy Hezbollah.

Over the past week, this myth has been exposed as a lie twice. First, the Hezbollah-controlled Lebanese parliament elected Hezbollah's candidate, Hassan Diab, to serve as Lebanon's next prime minister and form its next government. Diab is entirely controlled by Hezbollah. There is no way that a government he leads will act independently of Hezbollah.

Second, following airstrikes against Iranian assets and personnel south of Damascus this week that were attributed to Israel,

Khamenei's top security adviser Ali Akbar Velayati threatened to respond by waging war against Israel from Lebanon.

In his words, "The Zionist entity will regret its actions. We will respond sooner or later with the resistance in Syria and Lebanon. Hezbollah will harm Israel in its territory if it dares to strike in Lebanon."

In other words, Iran said – and not for the first time – that it controls Lebanon. Through Hezbollah, it can and will attack Israel from Lebanon.

Since the first Iranian war against Israel from Lebanon in 2006, US policy has been to pretend that the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Lebanese government are independent entities that oppose Hezbollah and operate independently of Hezbollah. The fact that Lebanese military forces provided logistical and targeting assistance to Hezbollah forces during the 2006 war made no impression on then-Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice when she announced and began implementing a policy of massively funding, arming and training the LAF. The fact that the Lebanese government served throughout the war as Hezbollah's foreign ministry also made no impression as the US massively expanded its economic assistance to the Lebanese government. Indeed, the US increased its funding of the Lebanese government after Hezbollah won the 2007 elections and began exercising formal control over the Lebanese government following its mini-coup in 2008.

Israel, for its part, recognizes that Lebanon is controlled by Hezbollah and also recognizes that the goal of its actions against Iran must play on and exacerbate the destabilization of the regime's grip on power at home and throughout its colonial possessions.

In a speech on Wednesday, Eisenkot's successor Lt. Gen. Aviv Kochavi set out Israel's plan for fighting Lebanon in the next war with Iran. He made clear that Lebanese infrastructure and urban centers would be targeted because they serve Hezbollah's war machine.

Israel's military goal in its operations in Syria has apparently shifted in recent weeks. Until now, the purpose of Israel's military operations in Syria was to prevent the shipment of advanced, precision-guided munitions to Hezbollah. But now, judging from public statements and the reported attacks on Iranian assets, Israel's policy in Syria is a combination of aggressive strikes and attrition aimed at turning Syria into Iran's Vietnam.

Israel's concept is right. But it may be alone in recognizing the nature of the challenge that Iran poses at home and through its proxies. The Europeans support Iran in all practical purposes. Despite the fact that Iran has now enriched twice the amount of uranium it is permitted to enrich under the nuclear deal, and has opened its heavy water reactor at Arak in material breach of the agreement, the Europeans refuse to restore UN sanctions even though, under the nuclear deal, they were supposed to automatically "snap back" the minute Iran breached the deal.

The Americans for their part are divided. The official position of the Trump administration – restated this week by Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin at a conference in Doha – is that the US seeks to negotiate a better deal with the regime.

So too, last week, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo ordered the release of \$130 million in economic aid to the Hezbollah-controlled Lebanese government.

Dennis Ross, an elder statesman of Washington's fantasy-based foreign policy elite, penned an article in Foreign Policy this week where he recommended that the Democratic Congress budget massive aid to Lebanon to show the Lebanese people that America has their back and Iran doesn't. For Ross, the fact that Iran controls the Lebanese government that would receive all that money is neither here nor there.

Israel is the only one fighting Iran militarily today. It can manage alone, but only so long as the Americans don't go wobbly and the Europeans feel pressured to change course on Iran. Along these lines, it is imperative that Israel ensure the Americans and Europeans understand the significance of Rouhani's involvement in the repression of last month's protests, Diab's election, and Velayati's threat this week to wage war against Israel through Lebanon.

The Iranian regime is unified in its commitment to maintain its control over Iran and its empire. If they consolidate their Obama-era gains and complete their nuclear weapons program, it will be a strategic disaster for Israel and the world as a whole.

Iran must be fought relentlessly on all fronts until its regime is consigned to history. (Israel Hayom Dec 30)