



selection of Iran's next ruler. On March 8, the Assembly of Experts officially named Mojtaba Khamenei, the late ayatollah's 56-year-old son, as the next leader—a decision that has set the stage for a total collision

## Commentary...

### It's Time for Canada's Jews to Leave By Larry Zeifman

I have lived in Toronto and Thornhill my whole life - some 64.5 years. My family has been in Canada since 1903.

On Friday night the Shul I have been a member of for some 40 years (and was president of) - Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto - and the Shul I was a member of before that - Shaarei Shomayim - were both shot up.

There are prominent US podcasters that are depicting Jews as evil. Countless Canadians commenting on the Shul shootings are suggesting that we have it coming to us.

Yes, the mayor of Vaughan Steven Del Duca is doing all he can to defend and protect the Jews of Vaughan.

The Prime Minister, the Premier and the mayor of Toronto are doing squat. Our national broadcaster - in fact most of Canada's media - is hostile to us and our national homeland. And on the very rare occasions that Toronto police lay charges against those who continuously harass and intimidate us, almost all of those charges are dismissed by Ontario's liberal criminal "justice" system.

I have to say I fear for the worst, and I can't see how there is a future for Jews in this country. It's time to leave. Israel in the middle of a war is far safer for us than Toronto.

It is said that every diaspora has an end date. I fear Canada's has now passed.

I hear Jewish leadership saying that "We're not going anywhere". I fear that is the wrong message. We should be telling political leaders and our fellow Canadians that we are leaving. That we no longer feel wanted, appreciated, protected or safe here in Canada, making our stay here foolish and dangerous.

Jews have contributed tremendously to this country - socially and economically. I hazard to speculate on how many jobs we have created but I am confident that it is far in excess of our proportionate size. How many Canadian hospitals have we built? If Canada doesn't want us here, then it's time to devote our energies to building societies and economies elsewhere.

While I am a lifelong Zionist and a huge fan of aliya, I recognize that not everyone can or will make aliya. (For now) Florida and other parts of the US beckon as well, but they can never match the opportunity to live a truly genuine Jewish life in the Land of Israel.

The focus of Canadian Jewish communal leadership today needs to be *CanExit* - facilitating aliya and helping our more vulnerable to leave Canada.

Thanks Canada - it was great while it lasted - or at least it was until 2015, when Canada's decline began.

*The writer, a Toronto accountant, has been the editor of Israel News for over 30 years. This article is adapted from his Facebook post of March 8.*

### Vetting the Ayatollah: Why Trump's Intervention in Iran could Save Generations of Jewish Lives By Amine Ayoub

The geopolitical landscape of the Middle East is currently undergoing its most profound seismic shift since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Following the decapitation of the Iranian regime's senior echelons—most notably, the death of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in a joint U.S.-Israeli military strike on Feb. 28—the Islamic Republic faces an existential vacuum.

In a paradigm-shifting intervention, U.S. President Donald Trump has explicitly declared his intent to involve the United States in the

with the United States.

Speaking in an explosive Axios interview prior to that announcement, the president categorically rejected the succession of Khamenei, the late ayatollah's son, dismissing him as a "lightweight" and drawing a direct parallel to the engineered political transition the United States executed in Venezuela with Delcy Rodríguez. This unapologetic assertion of American leverage over Tehran's internal succession represents a generational opportunity to definitively end the regime's 46-year campaign of state-sponsored terrorism.

Trump's invocation of the "Venezuela model" signals a highly pragmatic, results-oriented evolution in American foreign policy. It marks a deliberate departure from the nebulous, often disastrous goal of total democratic nation-building, in favor of aggressive, targeted interference to secure a compliant leadership structure.

By publicly declaring Khamenei the younger "unacceptable," the administration has drawn a non-negotiable red line. Mojtaba, a hardline cleric deeply entrenched within the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and the Basij paramilitary forces, represents the absolute continuity of his father's catastrophical policies. Allowing him to consolidate power would guarantee the perpetuation of Iran's proxy warfare, its nuclear brinkmanship and its foundational obsession with the destruction of the State of Israel.

The stakes of this succession crisis cannot be marginalized. For more than four decades, the ideological mandate of the supreme leader has necessitated the exportation of radical Islamic revolution, paid for in the blood of American service members, Israeli civilians and global Jewish communities. From the devastating Hezbollah suicide bombings in Buenos Aires to the subterranean fortresses built by Hamas in Gaza, the logistical and financial trail leads directly to the supreme leader's office.

Furthermore, the ideological contagion funded by Tehran has fueled the unprecedented surge of anti-Western radicalization on university campuses and has necessitated security upgrades and the militarization of synagogues worldwide. The West has paid an exorbitant price to contain a threat that is fundamentally ideological in nature.

The choice of Iran's next leader will determine the trajectory of regional security for decades to come.

This unparalleled vulnerability provides Washington with the necessary leverage to enforce its will. Trump's strategy recognizes that military strikes alone, while tactically necessary, are strategically insufficient if the ideological head of the serpent is allowed to regenerate. The United States must now marshal its full spectrum of national power, including crippling economic sanctions, intelligence operations and the credible threat of overwhelming military force, to block the ascension of any candidate tied to the IRGC's terror apparatus.

For this strategy to succeed, the international community, led by Western defense establishments and Diaspora advocacy groups, must mobilize to lock in this policy. There must be a unified, bipartisan consensus that the United States will not tolerate the coronation of another hardliner. Policymakers must pressure allied nations to publicly support Washington's vetting process and condition any future diplomatic engagement or sanctions relief on the verifiable dismantling of Iran's proxy networks and the cessation of its anti-Western hostility.

The objective is not merely to select a leader who will bring temporary quiet, but to install an executive authority structurally constrained from exporting terror.

The Iranian regime is on its knees, and the window to dictate the

terms of its future is remarkably narrow. If the West equivocates and permits a figure like Mojtaba Khamenei to assume the mantle of supreme leader, it will be condemning the Middle East to another generation of bloodshed and instability.

Trump has handed the free world a pragmatic playbook for neutralizing the greatest state sponsor of terrorism. It is an operational imperative that this strategy is executed without compromise. The choice of Iran's next leader will determine the trajectory of regional security for decades to come; America must ensure that it makes the right choice. (JNS Mar 9)

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### **Why I Want to be in Israel Right Now** By David Magerman

There is a war going on in Israel. Iran is launching barrages of ballistic missiles at targets all over Israel, particularly at night, to keep them exhausted. The country is locked down in a state of siege. No one can leave their homes to do anything that will bring them more than a few minutes away from a shelter.

Everyone there, whether they admit it or not, is terrified of the dangers they face. And yet I desperately want to be in Israel now.

Here is why.

I am a strong advocate for Israel and a huge supporter of the war we are waging for sovereignty, security and survival. I believe that the price we are paying for complete victory over our enemies and security for our homeland is worth it.

But that's the problem: I'm not paying the price.

The psychological torture Iran and its proxies are inflicting on the brave Jewish residents of Israel is unfathomable to anyone who is not there. Parents, siblings and children have been called up into the Israeli Defense Forces to fight over the past two and a half years. Everyone in Israel knows too many people who have been killed fighting for the right of the Jewish people to live peacefully in their homeland.

The vast majority of Israelis support the war against Iran, as they have supported the war against Hamas and Hezbollah. But they are paying a high price.

Deep in my heart, I am with the people of Israel. But in the face of psychological torture, statements of solidarity are close to meaningless.

I keep the IDF Home Front Command app on all day, every day, so I hear every alert as they happen. I get woken up during the night when the sirens go off. I support groups financially that are helping fight the war, develop strategies to win it, and assist people suffering from it.

I choose to behave as though I am as impacted by the war as people living in Israel. But that ability to choose belies the emptiness of my efforts. By being able to choose to live this way, I am eliminating the psychological aspects of the terror Iran is inflicting on Israel. In a sense, by choosing this path, I feel empowered.

I promise you that the vast majority of Israelis don't feel empowered by the life they are being forced to lead right now. And even if they do, they know they can't opt out, which makes what I am doing incomparable to what Israelis are experiencing.

My daughter is in Israel, and I have other relatives there. My friends and their children are in Israel. They have no choice but to remain stuck at home, running in and out of bomb shelters, waking up multiple times a night by sirens, scared of being killed by a missile and challenged by the monotony of not being able to do anything about it.

And I am play-acting their experience in the security of my American home, trying to simulate what they are going through out of solidarity but with no hope of sharing in their real suffering.

It makes no sense to want to be in Israel right now. It's dangerous. And being there won't help Israel win this war. If anything, it will make more people worry about my safety. But I want to be with my people while they are suffering. And I want to experience the same jeopardy—by force and not by choice—that I am enabling through my prayers and actions.

We need to keep fighting this war until we achieve complete victory. In my unemotional opinion, the price that Israelis are paying is

worth the outcome.

We Jews in the Diaspora should do everything we can to support Israel in this fight. But we shouldn't pretend that our solidarity with Israel, and our choices in how we support Israel and Israelis, is enough.

Every Jew living in Israel is a hero of this war. I want to be in Israel now because I want to be a part of the army of Israelis who are winning the war simply by being there. (JNS Mar 9)

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### **This Status Quo, That Status Quo** By Yisrael Medad

Two weeks after the 1967 victory in the Six-Day War, Israeli Minister of Defense Moshe Dayan changed the status quo that had officially been in place at the Western Wall courtyard in Jerusalem. It had been set by British Mandatory authorities as part of the November 1928 White Paper, authored by Leopold Amery, Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Interestingly, Amery was the son of Charles Frederick Amery of England and Elisabeth Johanna Saphir, who was born to the Leitner family of Hungarian Jewish descent. She had left England for British-controlled India, where her parents had settled and converted to Protestantism, and where Leopold was born. (Elisabeth later left India and returned to England, divorcing her husband.)

That status quo established a Jewish "right of access to the pavement in front of the wall for the purposes of their devotion." However, no further advantages would be afforded them.

The government apparently could not "compel the Muslim owners of the pavement to accord any further privileges or rights to the Jewish community."

The basis for their conclusions: "to the Muslims belong the sole ownership of, and the sole proprietary right to, the Western Wall." The Temple Mount precincts, the British decided, as well as the Wall and its alleyway, formed an integral part of the Haram-esh-Sharif area and were deemed "Waqf property."

Therefore, only those objects that were allowed to be taken to the Wall under the Turkish regime would be permitted. Those did not include benches, stools or prayer partitions that separated men and women (mechitza). In December 1930, an International Commission confirmed those prohibitions, adding, among other things, a ban on blowing the shofar at the wall.

At the Temple Mount, no Jewish prayer had been allowed at all since the time Maimonides entered the site in 1165. In fact, from the late 13th century until the middle of the 19th century, no non-Muslim had been permitted to enter the Haram al-Sharif compound, under pain of death.

Those who did, as in 1391 when four Franciscan friars entered and attempted to preach their faith, were martyred in a most horrible fashion.

The change in the status quo in 1967 also affected arrangements at the Temple Mount. Jews could now enter, but as tourists. The government, and later, the High Court, recognized the Temple Mount as a Jewish holy site. The Cave of the Patriarchs (Machpelah) in Hebron was also opened to Jewish visitors who, until 1967, similarly had been prevented from entering the edifice.

At the Western Wall Plaza, the status quo began to move. The start was a 1994 Israeli Supreme Court judgment addressing a petition of the Women of the Wall. Menachem Elon viewed as reasonable an Israeli Ministry of Religious Affairs regulation prohibiting prayer that is not according to the local custom. Moreover, it expresses the principle of maintaining the status quo, he wrote.

Fellow justice Shlomo Levin disagreed. His opinion was that "the nature of a custom changes according to the changes of time." Paramount to him was that "a pluralistic and tolerant approach must be expressed to the opinions and customs of others."

After several Women of the Wall were arrested in April 2013 for wearing tallises (considered a disruption of the public order), District Court Judge Moshe Sobel reinterpreted the High Court's 1994

decision. He decided to remove any legal provision forbidding Women of the Wall from wearing prayer shawls and praying in their own fashion. They would not be charged.

Sobel preferred that the Western Wall custom be pluralistic. A new, post-1967 status quo had been created. The court identified with egalitarian feminist thinking and removed the “status quo” from being defined by an Orthodox religious framework.

The other status quo in place at the Temple Mount in Jerusalem has been administratively altered. Although the High Court had long recognized a principled lawful right of worship by Jews there, they permitted that the police could prevent it. Their reason was that the location is “extremely sensitive” and that public order would probably be disturbed by Muslims.

Why that same thinking does not apply to the Western Wall—where Reform and Conservative prayer seems to cause verbal, and at times, physical violence—remains unexplained.

However, these last several years, a specially approved path circumvents the Temple Mount’s sacred sections for Jews. Brief prostrations are allowed, and short prayers in a quorum are permitted, at its eastern section.

This situation has upset groups like the Israeli NGO Ir Amim (Hebrew for “City of Nations”). It sees these developments as “violations” of the status quo. As The Jerusalem Post informed on Feb. 15, policies including “expanding Jewish prayers in the compound [and] granting permission to bring prayer sheets for Jews” are “changes to the status quo” and need be condemned.

In addition, Ir Amim criticized a “time-sharing” policy of worshipping at separate hours as something that “could lead to widespread harm.” The group wishes that the ban on Jewish prayer be reinstated “in accordance with the status quo.” Supporters of the Women of the Wall also decline to express support for a new status quo there.

Readers can be forgiven for being perplexed, even confounded, by this course of events.

One new status quo at the Wall is praised by liberals and progressives, even in the face of ultra-Orthodox violence, verbal or otherwise, while another developing at the Temple Mount is faulted and censured. They both essentially fulfill the same aspiration of freedom of worship. And yet, they both come with threats of violence amid changes they do or do not champion from opposite religious-oriented viewpoints.

Would that be a new form of the Jerusalem Derangement Syndrome? (JNS Mar 10)

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## **The Issue for War Opponents is Trump, not Israel or Iran’s Regime of Terror** By Jonathan S. Tobin

Ten days after the beginning of the U.S.-Israeli air offensive against Iran’s terrorist regime, the ultimate outcome of the joint campaign remains uncertain. Iran’s government and military have largely been decapitated, with the country’s ability to inflict terror on the region drastically reduced. Further damage has been done to its ballistic-missile and nuclear programs. Yet it’s still unclear if the theocratic tyranny in Tehran will fall, as both America and Israel want and expect.

What is clear is the focus of the opposition. Its campaign primarily revolves around one issue—and it isn’t the Jewish state.

That comes despite attempts by right-wing and left-wing antisemites to advance the big lie that the United States was forced or led into the conflict by Jerusalem. Many of the war’s critics from both ends of the political spectrum are united by their antipathy for Israel, plain and simple. Common threads also tie the opposition when it comes to their disinclination to holding the Islamic Republic accountable for its behavior to arguments attempting to delegitimize Israel’s war on Hamas after the Palestinian Arab terror attacks in southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023.

But as critiques of the Iran war start to harden, it’s obvious that

Israel’s role as America’s partner in the conflict is not the main factor driving the opposition.

Opinion polls taken during the war’s first week made one thing obvious. The decision to strike Iran appears to be opposed by a majority of Americans.

A deep dive into the numbers finds that the main driver of opinion on the conflict is partisanship. An overwhelming majority of Republicans, as high as 84% in an NPR/Marist poll, are in favor of military action against Tehran, while 86% of Democrats and 61% of independents are against it. That led to an overall result of 56% against the war and 44% in favor of it. When asked what they think about Iran, 70% of Republicans perceive Iran to be a major threat to the United States; however, only 27% of Democrats see it that way.

The roots of that disagreement can be traced back to the debate over former President Barack Obama’s appeasement of Iran that culminated in the 2015 nuclear deal. As late as 2013, most congressional Democrats were quite hawkish when it came to efforts to stop Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons and punishing it for being the world’s leading state sponsor of terror. But once Obama made support for the nuclear accord a litmus test of personal loyalty to him, his party dutifully fell in line. That also materially contributed to the decline in Democratic support for Israel. The people and government of the Jewish state were, for good reasons, appalled by a document that would have guaranteed that a country committed to their destruction would have eventually acquired a nuclear weapon.

As much as that decade-old argument about a failed diplomatic attempt, as Obama put it, to allow Iran “to get right with the world,” set up the current divide about how to deal with Iran, that isn’t what is determining opinion about the conflict. And while the post-Oct. 7 surge in antisemitism and hostility to Israel is connected to the debate about Trump’s decision, it doesn’t entirely explain it.

It’s really all about Trump.

Disapproval of the war is different from the debate about Israel that has been simmering for the last 30 months.

The willful refusal to acknowledge reality with respect to the genocidal Palestinian war to wipe out the Jewish state isn’t the same thing as the critique about battling Iran. Many around the world bought into the gaslighting in which Hamas and its allies were depicted as the victims, rather than the Israelis who were attacked. The fact that they had started a war with unspeakable atrocities and the largest mass slaughter of Jews since the Holocaust wasn’t so much rationalized as simply disbelieved. It was soon followed by a willingness to buy into Hamas propaganda that claimed Israel’s war of self-defense was a “genocide.” A lot of that had to do with the influence of toxic ideologies that falsely claimed that Israelis and Jews were “white” oppressors who were always in the wrong, and that Palestinians were “people of color” who were always their victims.

While there is some superficial comparison of attitudes about the war against Iran to the one against Hamas, outside of the extreme left, the anti-war argument isn’t centered on a disingenuous attempt to transform the ayatollahs and their minions into Third World victims of racism, as is the case with the “pro-Palestine” crowd.

What it all boils down to is a belief that anything done by this president has got to be misguided and manipulative.

A classic example of how this works was a so-called “news analysis” published by The New York Times on March 8, which tried to make the argument that the U.S.-Israel strikes on Iran were analogous to Russian President Vladimir Putin’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Even if the article by former Times Moscow bureau chief Anton Troianovski had been framed as an opinion piece (which it is, despite the “analysis” label and its layout in the newspaper’s news section), it was absurdly argued and devoid of context or sense. Its only point was to paint Trump as no different from Putin.

Whatever one thinks about the Russia-Ukraine battle or the U.S.-Israel operation against Tehran, simply put, there is no comparison between these two events. A longstanding dispute between Ukrainian

nationalism and Russian imperial ambitions dates back to the tsarist era. Ukraine was not a nuclear or terror threat to Russia—or any other country. Its government was not driven by a messianic belief in its right to impose a particular religion on the world. It was also not building missiles and seeking to acquire nuclear weapons to destroy another nation, as was the case with Iran’s attempts to eliminate Israel.

Having relentlessly promoted the Russian collusion hoax for years, only to see it eventually exposed as a partisan conspiracy theory, the Times is still seeking to revive belief in the notion that Trump is a fascist thug, not unlike Putin.

This article is a particularly egregious example of journalists having no shame about letting their Trump Derangement Syndrome affect their work. But even a dispassionate look at most of the liberal mainstream media’s war coverage shows that it has more in common with how they treated the Russia collusion hoax than their coverage of Oct. 7, and the multipronged war that followed.

The consistent theme that colors arguments about Trump’s right to authorize U.S. airstrikes, America’s relations with allies, his statements about the war and uncertainty about its outcome is the belief that the specifics about the threat from Iran are not as important as the liberal detestation for the president. The point being: If you’ve spent the last decade believing that he is a fascist, neo-Nazi authoritarian, then it doesn’t really matter if the position he’s taken is one that all of his 21st-century predecessors have essentially endorsed, though he is the first to act on it.

Interestingly, even many of Trump’s most vociferous critics at outlets like the Times and elsewhere aren’t trying to whitewash the Iranian regime, even though many of them were cheerleading for appeasement of them during the Obama and Biden presidencies. Most agree that the government that slaughtered tens of thousands of its own people in January and that engages in international terrorism is awful and at least a potential threat to the United States.

And so, even if the war is being waged in defense of American interests and global peace—and Iran’s leaders are murderers who have been waging an Islamist terrorist war on the West for the past 47 years—they simply cannot get behind any initiative undertaken by the Trump administration.

Let’s concede that reasonable arguments can be made about the limits of presidential power and the fact that wars are no longer preceded by declarations passed by Congress. There are also reasons to doubt whether an American push for regime change will work in even the worst of countries. Nor can anyone be sure that a change would lead to an improvement over the current situation, though it’s hard to imagine anything worse than the Islamic tyranny that has existed in Iran since 1979.

The debate about the war isn’t so much about those concerns as it is one rooted in the belief that Trump is simply beyond the pale and must be opposed at all times and at all costs.

His opponents relentlessly doubled down on the “fascist” argument throughout his first term and during his time out of office—and continue to do so, despite his triumphant return to the White House after winning the popular vote and the Electoral College in 2024. While the anti-Trump “resistance” narrative was quiet for a while after the resounding defeat of former Vice President Kamala Harris, it has returned with a vengeance. Discussion of the war on Iran is only the latest manifestation of it.

Some of it can be understood as an automatic backlash to a president who is unlike any of the men who preceded him. As one Washington Post article conceded, Trump’s conduct as a war leader isn’t very different from the way he operates at other times, so it’s hardly surprising that reactions to his Iran policy would not change.

Like the situation in Israel and many other democracies, 21st-century democracy in America is the function of a bifurcated society in which left and right no longer read, listen or watch the same media. They essentially avoid each other on social media or in any other places where public discourse takes place. And with politics now playing the role that religion used to have in most people’s lives, it’s

no wonder that partisan divisions have hardened into inflexible beliefs on which no compromise is possible.

Trump’s unorthodox style still grates on his opponents and delights his supporters. The former still seems unable to grasp that his political rise was powered by the failures of both Republican and Democratic Party leaders to cope with new challenges, and by the arrogance and contempt of Obama and the credentialed elites he led toward much of the American electorate.

On Iran, as on other issues, such as illegal immigration and the deindustrialization of America, Trump is merely confronting a longstanding problem that his predecessors helped create and then ignored. The same was true of his approach to Israel, where he swept aside establishment thinking with respect to decisions like moving the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, and declining to let Palestinian intransigence get in the way of his 2020 Abraham Accords.

The refusal to give him credit for that diplomatic achievement was proof of the belief among his supporters that even if he cured cancer, his opponents wouldn’t applaud. Ending the appeasement of Iran and taking decisive action to ensure that it can no longer threaten America and the West is not quite the same thing as curing cancer. Still, the tone of critiques of his decision is not dissimilar to the way his peacemaking efforts have been dismissed by those who now oppose the war.

They blame him for not making the case for war while simultaneously refusing to acknowledge the arguments he has made justifying military action. They accuse him of acting on an authoritarian whim. However, the long buildup to the offensive, along with the last attempts the administration made to get Iran to come to a diplomatic agreement, makes it obvious that the decision was the result of a long, deeply considered process. Faulting him for failing to build bipartisan support for his policy ignores the fact that his opponents have no interest in playing the role of loyal opposition; instead, they forge ahead as a “resistance” to a presidency they believe is inherently illegitimate.

They’re also ignoring the clear evidence, as retired U.S. Army officer and military expert John Spencer points out, that the doom-and-gloom predictions of Trump opponents about the war are misguided. While nothing is certain, to date, the strategy employed by both the United States and its Israeli ally seems to be working, and those of the Iranian government are failing. Success isn’t guaranteed, but there is no reason to think it is another Iraq or anything like the disaster Trump-haters are sure is in the works.

Both left-wing hysteria about alleged Trumpian authoritarianism and the antisemitic conspiracy mongering of right-wing opponents of the war, such as far-right podcaster Tucker Carlson, should be seen for what they are. Most of what passes for anti-Iran war arguments aren’t about the actual situation on the ground and are fundamentally unserious.

That arguments about Iran, Islamist terror and the war to destroy Israel have been largely overridden by those about Trump is frustrating to those who see these issues as transcending politics. The struggle to resist Iran’s Islamist terror shouldn’t be bound up with the derangement that Trump inspires in his opponents.

Israelis are dodging missiles shot by the Islamist regime and its terrorist auxiliaries, while Iranian civilians weigh whether a renewed struggle to overthrow their tyrants is worth the risk. While that is happening, we in the United States ought to be able to have an open conversation about these subjects. That dialogue should not be determined by feelings toward the president; rather, it should focus on the clear threat the Islamist regime poses to the West and the United States.

At the moment, that doesn’t seem possible. Yet Iran-war critics need to take a breath. They need to stop thinking about whether U.S. failure in the war will help the Democrats in the midterms and start focusing on a subject that ought to unite Americans, rather than divide them. (JNS Mar 9)