



ISRAEL NEWS

*A collection of the week's news from Israel
From the Bet El Twinning / Israel Action Committee of
Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation*

Commentary...

Canada No Longer Feels Safe for Jews By Casey Babb

Last month in Toronto, at one of the largest synagogues in North America, I stood in the back of a dimly lit auditorium and listened to law expert Natasha Hausdorff speak at length about Israel, antisemitism, and threats to Jewish life in Canada. To attend the event, guests had to pass through a police checkpoint, wait in freezing temperatures to get an entry badge, and then go through metal detectors. The venue was teeming with security both inside and out.

This has become the norm in Canada, and for good reason. Just weeks later, that same synagogue, along with two others in the city, was riddled with bullets. Then, in what police are calling a "national security incident," two suspects shot at the U.S. consulate in Toronto, leading to beefed-up protection for U.S. and Israeli diplomatic buildings in the city.

The question many Jewish Canadians are now asking is, how long before we experience our own Tree of Life or Bondi Beach attack? Virtually everywhere I turn, Jews in Canada are not only wondering whether this country can remain our home, but if it's ever truly been ours to begin with.

Despite periods of heightened rejection, bigotry, and marginalization, Jews have had a significant presence in Canada for generations. Canada's Jewish community, the fourth largest in the world, can be traced back to violent antisemitic persecution elsewhere. In the late 19th century, for instance, Eastern European Jews seeking refuge from pogroms made their way to Canada. Likewise, after the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, Jews from North African Arab countries looked to Canada for a new beginning, as those states embarked on a campaign of violence and denationalization against their Jewish communities. In the 1970s, once the Soviet Union relaxed their oppressive restrictions on Jewish emigration, large numbers of Soviet Jews left for Canada, where they started over. For three-quarters of a century, Jewish life here has been largely colored by hope, renewal, and generally speaking, a sense of belonging.

There were 6,219 antisemitic incidents in Canada in 2024, or an average of about 17 incidents of harassment, vandalism, and violence per day.

Yet, since the terrorist attacks in Israel on October 7, 2023, that has been turned on its head, and the expectation of Jews for safety, security, and acceptance in Canada now feels like a shattered illusion. There are no warning sirens alerting us to run to bomb shelters like in Israel, but we live with a general unease that comes with isolation and a growing sense of abandonment and betrayal. Jews in Canada have been forced to recognize that, making up just one percent of the population, they are no less a minority than their ancestors were in Kishinev, Baghdad, or Kielce, and now may face the kinds of threats that drove Jews away from the places that they once called home.

According to a report published by B'nai Brith Canada in April 2025, there were 6,219 antisemitic incidents in Canada in 2024, or an average of about 17 incidents of harassment, vandalism, and violence per day, or nearly one incident an hour for every hour of the year. Data released by Statistics Canada confirms the severity of the situation, showing that between 2020 and 2024, antisemitic hate crimes in Canada nearly tripled.

At the time of writing, it is not yet mid-March, and already 22 antisemitic incidents have been reported in Toronto alone, accounting for nearly 65 percent of all hate crime reports in the city. In addition to multiple shootings of synagogues, numerous Jewish-owned businesses in Montreal were recently vandalized with antisemitic graffiti, and earlier this year in Winnipeg, Manitoba, a synagogue and childcare

center were spray-painted with swastikas and other hate symbols.

This month, in a particularly disturbing case, a family in Halifax, Nova Scotia, went public about pulling their 15-year-old son out of the school system after years of harassment

that included taunts of "Jewboy" and Nazi salutes. On March 13, police in Toronto announced charges against 27-year-old Rostam Rashidkhani, who is accused of harassing a homeowner with antisemitic remarks on multiple occasions as well as showing up to the victim's house and playing a speech "... given by Adolph Hitler on his cellular telephone." The examples never seem to end.

In addition to these and other acts of hatred, there are issues weighing heavily on Canada's Jewish community that fall beneath the threshold of violence, and that cannot be logged as hate crimes. For instance, a fringe media outlet in Canada called The Maple has put together a list of more than 200 Canadian Jews who have allegedly served in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) called "Find IDF Soldiers," with no clear purpose other than to put these individuals at risk. Heather McPherson, a sitting Member of Parliament, is sponsoring a petition asking the current government of Canada to investigate Canadian citizens who have served in the IDF—effectively including almost all immigrants from Israel, where military service is mandatory—on suspicion that they may have committed war crimes.

There are also the weekly demonstrations across the country, veiled as Palestinian activism, which often include vile antisemitic content and images reminiscent of Nazi Germany, calls for Jews to "go back to Poland," direct threats to "Zionists," and a wide range of libels used to vilify Jews and Israel. Virtually none of this is considered a "hate crime" here, yet it all fuels a deep and growing sense of seclusion, helplessness, and alienation.

From coast to coast, demonizing and targeting Jews has become so normalized that large swaths of the Jewish community are beginning to retreat inward.

The situation in Canada has become so dire for Jews that Iddo Moed, Israel's ambassador to Canada, recently described the country as one of the world's leading "centers of antisemitism." Israel's deputy foreign minister Sharen Haskel recently said that in Canada, if this keeps up, things will "end in blood." Israel's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gideon Sa'ar, and President Isaac Herzog have also spoken about Canada in recent days, with President Herzog noting that "all eyes are on Canada." The fact that Israelis are talking about Canada in the middle of a war says a great deal.

Meanwhile, in addition to the homegrown threats, Canada is facing state-sponsored terrorism backed by Iran. A boxing club in Richmond Hill, Ontario, owned by a prominent Iranian activist, was recently sprayed with dozens of bullets. Another critic of the Iranian regime, Masood Masjoody, had been missing in British Columbia for a month before his body was found a week ago, with police now treating his case as a homicide. Canada's spy agency, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, recently stated that within the last year, the agency has disrupted numerous potentially "lethal threats" to Canadians, stemming from Iran. If so far Canadian Jews have not yet been directly targeted by Iran, it is easy to conceive of this changing—and given Canada's rising levels of antisemitism, it is not clear what kind of public support the community can expect if they are targeted in a terrorist attack.

And yet all of this—the known cases of hatred, the terrorism statistics, and the data on antisemitism—fails to capture how Jewish life in Canada is fundamentally changing. From coast to coast, demonizing and targeting Jews has become so normalized that large swaths of the Jewish community are beginning to retreat inward.

Menorahs are lit in the back of the house, not the front. Judaica, including necklaces and kippahs, are left on nightstands. Mezuzahs are taken down. Hebrew is whispered, if it is spoken in public at all. Families now routinely skip services at synagogues for fear of

violence. A woman recently told me that she has reverted to using her maiden name, because it “sounds less Jewish,” and that friends of hers are doing the same.

Not long ago, Jews from around the world flocked to Canada with hopes of a better future. Now many Canadian Jews are seeking an exit strategy. While the immediate concern in Canada is a large-scale terrorist attack, the greater long-term fear is the collapse of Jewish life here altogether. Right now, it feels like that is where we are headed.

(The Free Press Mar 16)

A Few Thoughts for our Fellow Jews who are Currently Outside of Israel

By Dr. Jacob L. Freedman

First off, please forgive us if it seems like we're a bit cranky.

You see, for the past few weeks there have been millions of people trying to explode us all which makes it tough to get a good night's rest. This is in addition to the hundreds of thousands of folks who have been hoping to stab or shoot us on our way to work for the past century or so.

And no, we aren't being paranoid. You can look it up on the internet if you want to, but I generally tell anxious people to “Stop Checking News, Start Helping Jews.”

Between dodging cluster bombs aimed at our civilian centers, we also try to avoid the politicians and pundits who are inevitably busy telling us that we are the oppressors or that we started yet another war by living in our homes. We really only check the news to know when school might restart for our little guys.

So for our fellow Jews in America, Canada, England, Belgium, Australia, and Iceland: forgive us if it took a while to respond to your messages. It was just busy here in the midst of an existential war. And we are sorry if we couldn't answer your calls, the bomb shelters at work have bad reception because they're underground in the parking lot as that's best for protecting our lives in spite of the lousy 5G reception.

And yet we are not bitter about any of this.

Extra days at home with the family in the bomb shelter gives us time to focus on what's most important. We've played seven-hours games of Monopoly without knocking down the board after landing on Park Place, re-wrote enough songs from The 80's to make even Weird Al Yankovic jealous, and have had many moments to share our individual hopes and dreams for the future with each other's undivided attention as multiple nations tried to wipe us out of existence. That's how you pass the time under feet of reinforced concrete when you're not sure if you'll exit alive.

Running back and forth to the bomb shelter dozens of times a day facilitates reaching the daily goal of 10,000 steps. Once we are there, waiting for up to an hour while the building is shaking gives us time and reason to practice daily mindfulness exercises to lower our blood pressure. And having a protected space in our home means that we've been able to host more than a few neighbors to discuss improving trash collection services before the upcoming local elections.

So what is our message for folks in The Diaspora? It's simple: we are good. In fact we are great. Actually, scratch that. We are better than good and great, we on fire over here.

Israel consistently rates amongst the best countries in the world irrespective of our crummy neighbors. A Gallup Poll on international happiness from exactly a month ago showed Israel at #2 for people under the age of 30. This blows Canada, America, England, and France out of the water in spite of the ongoing wars we are fighting and the associated high taxes. Why? Because we have purpose here. It's absolutely impossible for a Jew in Israel to ignore the moment-to-moment excitement of walking through our ancestral homeland.

While The Western World faces a mounting crisis due to lack of purpose to the point where fuzzy old videos of Bigfoot continue to garner national attention, Victor Frankel's “Man's Search for Meaning” remains ever relevant. It's no wonder that tens of thousands of Jews continue to make Aliyah to Israel each year after so many generations in Persia, Poland, and Prospect Park.

Is it tough sometimes over here? Sure it's tough sometimes, we aren't delusional you know. But it's definitely better than fleeing Israel

via Egypt and paying \$10k for a privately chartered plane to Greece before covering one's way back to the soulless streets of Los Angeles or even-heaven-forbid-Berlin. That's the polar opposite of The Jewish Nation's heroic and ongoing Post-Traumatic Growth!

So what do we want from you? What do your Israelis cousins and coworkers what from their fellow Jews from Boston to Buenos Aires? Well it certainly isn't pity. Israel is the only country that sends out national rescue flights to every corner of the world in order to shlep its people out of a vacation and back into a war zone! We are thrilled to be here and we don't need you to be anxious or fretful on our behalf.

Should you pray for us? That would be great but Jews don't do religious coercion and you are probably too scared to go to your local Chabad Center because of Tucker Carlson, Candace Owens, and everyone who voted for Ilhan Omar. Should you give Tzedekah to an Israeli Charity? That would also be good but we know you're saving up to go to Cancun or Malta for Passover and don't want you to miss out on that trip. Should you compulsively forward us AI-generated shorts of various politicians dancing while wearing ridiculous hats? That's also not necessary and while it's nice for you to cope using a mature ego defense like humor, we are a far too busy living the good life over here to watch the silly things you received from someone you met at a sushi restaurant.

We choose to be here because we can't bear to live anywhere else. Israel is our oxygen. It's kind of like the way you feel about The Super Bowl, Joe Rogan's Podcast, or some political party that panders for your vote by telling you that they don't tolerate anti-Semitism. We have first row tickets to redemption and wouldn't change it for nuthin'.

So what can you do for us? The truth is that you don't need to do anything for us because we are doing great and God will continue to protect The Jewish People like he's done since the days when Abraham our Forefather walked these lands.

Just try to be proud to know us and count us amongst your friends and family. (IsraelNationalNews.com Mar 15)

From Friend to Foe: Is Qatar Changing its Approach to Iran Following Tehran's Strikes Against It?

By Dr. Ariel Admoni and Dr. Pnina Shuker

Since the start of the U.S.–Israeli operation against Iran, a cautious and calculated shift appears to be emerging in Qatar's approach toward Tehran. While some elements of the close relationship between the two states are likely to persist, Iran's attacks against Gulf states, including Qatar, may push Doha toward a more critical, though still non-confrontational, policy toward Iran and reduce its willingness to advance the Iranian regime's interests.

Before Operation Epic Fury/Roaring Lion, Qatar was an active supporter and partner of the Iranian regime while at the same time carefully managing American expectations. The Iran-Qatar relationship included channels of communication and mutual visits, trade ties, and Qatari mediation between Iran and other states. Iran and Qatar also share the world's largest single gas field, North Dome-South Pars, which requires ongoing technical coordination between the two countries to ensure uninterrupted production and export.

Qatar is well-known for its support for Hezbollah and Hamas, but Doha has also at times helped Tehran blunt domestic unrest. Al Jazeera, Qatar's propaganda network, has generally framed Iran in relatively moderate terms and avoided extensive coverage of protests inside the country. At times it went further, directing criticism at Israel and the United States and claiming they were fueling internal unrest in Iran. During the 2022 World Cup, Qatar detained fans affiliated with the Iranian opposition and barred anti-regime Iranian journalists from entering the emirate. During the wave of protests in Iran preceding the current operation, Qatar's embassy in Washington reportedly documented demonstrators gathering outside its gates, possibly in order to pass their identities to Iranian authorities.

The U.S.–Israeli attack on Iran has, however, tested Qatar's ability to maintain this policy. As part of Iran's effort to target states hosting American forces and to exert indirect pressure on the United

States, Tehran launched missiles and drones at American and civilian targets across the Gulf on the first day of the war, and in the following days also struck civilian targets inside Qatar. Initially, the Qatari leadership attempted to maintain restraint, while Iranian officials sought to minimize friction with Doha despite the attacks. Statements from both sides portrayed the strikes as directed not at Qatar itself but at American facilities, such as the Al Udeid Air Base, where U.S. forces are stationed.

Qatar later responded harshly to the strikes on civilian targets on its territory, including critical infrastructure and industrial zones, among them liquefied natural gas facilities, as well as attacks directed at Doha's international airport, widely seen as the crown jewel of Qatar's tourism industry. A spokesperson for Qatar's Foreign Ministry told CNN explicitly that "Iran must pay a price" for the attack on Qatari territory and said that, at that time, Doha had suspended communications with Tehran. The message was reiterated in subsequent statements.

Qatar's prime minister, Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani, categorically rejected Iranian claims that the attacks were carried out in a way intended to avoid damage to civilian targets. Al Thani accused Iran of dragging its neighbors into the war, described the strikes as a blatant violation of Qatari sovereignty and international law, and warned that they would not go unanswered. He also stressed that despite Qatar's traditional preference for dialogue, the country would respond to any aggression that harmed its sovereignty, security, territorial integrity, or national interests. Doha also sent a sharply worded message to the United Nations Security Council stating that it reserves the right to self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter.

The Iranian attack on Qatar included strikes on QatarEnergy gas facilities in Ras Laffan. In response, the Qatari government ordered a complete shutdown of all gas and LNG production facilities. Beyond the immediate need for repairs and the security rationale, the move appears intended to generate international pressure to end the war, as many countries, including the United Kingdom and Germany, depend heavily on Qatari gas exports. Following Qatar's move, Bahrain and Kuwait similarly announced suspensions of energy supply. In the face of this unexpected Iranian aggression, Qatar appears to be trying to present a united front with the other Gulf states, even though under normal circumstances Doha does not hesitate to challenge them.

To some extent, Iranian aggression appears to have achieved part of its objective, at least in the Qatari arena. Beyond sharp rhetoric and a limited defensive response, including the downing of two Iranian aircraft that entered Qatari airspace and the arrest of Revolutionary Guard cells operating within its territory, Doha seems primarily focused on bringing the war to an end. True to its traditional approach, however, Qatar has not burned its bridges with Iran despite its criticism of Tehran's actions, a pattern clearly reflected in Al Jazeera's coverage. Alongside the harsh rhetoric of senior Qatari officials, the network continues at times to function as a platform for Iranian messaging, highlighting civilian suffering in Iran caused by American and Israeli strikes on the one hand while presenting a softer framing of Iranian aggression on the other.

This suggests that Qatar's anger toward Iran is largely rhetorical, intended to preserve its alignment with the Gulf camp and Washington but not necessarily to signal a genuine desire for rupture. Further evidence can be found in a narrative currently promoted both by Qatari media outlets and by scholars associated with Qatar, such as Azmi Bishara, claiming that Iran's Revolutionary Guards are acting independently in the current events and without direction from the clerical leadership. The narrative appears designed to justify maintaining relations with the Iranian regime should it survive the crisis.

Even if other Gulf states were to coordinate and launch a military move against Iran, a scenario that currently appears unlikely, Qatar's involvement would likely remain largely symbolic. Doha will probably continue "playing both sides," expressing support for one while maintaining ties with the other to hedge against the possibility that the Iranian regime survives the crisis. Qatar's future policy will depend in part on Iran's next moves. If Tehran were to take more severe action against Qatar, for example by targeting its leadership,

that step could constitute a red line that might push Doha toward more active involvement against Iran.

In this context, another aspect of Qatar's posture toward Iran merits attention: Doha's position regarding Hamas's presence in the country. An Israeli report suggested that, in response to Hamas's failure to condemn Iran's actions, Qatar informed the U.S. administration that it would expel the organization's leadership from its territory. Official Qatari sources have not responded to the reports. However, analysts associated with Qatar have denied them and characterized them as an Israeli attempt to spread disinformation.

Until the report is verified, it is worth recalling that Qatar has often used carefully managed media leaks regarding promises made behind closed doors, particularly on issues related to Hamas. A similar pattern was evident in early November, when Doha signaled possible steps through the media without publicly committing to them. (Jerusalem Institute of Strategy and Security Mar 15)

Legacy Organizations Skittish on Confronting the Scourge of Anti-Zionism on Campus By Naya Lekht and Casey Babb

Anti-Zionism, as a social movement, arrived on North American campuses in 2001. It began with grassroots efforts by student groups mobilizing around Palestine. By 2005, within just four years, Israel Apartheid Week was launched, soon becoming an annual fixture of campus life alongside the growing BDS movement. Together, these recurring campaigns became powerful vehicles for recruiting and radicalizing students, particularly into the anti-Zionist cause.

Confrontational and intimidating, campus anti-Zionism quickly created a hostile campus climate for Jews. Chants such as "Zionist settlers leave us alone, Palestine is our home," and "Hey hey, ho ho, Zionism has got to go" became normal university slogans from coast to coast.

However, the movement reached a dramatic escalation during the 2023-24 campus encampments, which in several instances resulted in discrimination, harassment and physical assaults against Jewish students and faculty. In some cases, phrases such as "Death 2 Zionism" and "Zionist Baby Killers" were scrawled on buildings or sidewalks. In other instances, Jewish students and professors identified as "Zionists" were prevented from moving freely on campuses.

At Columbia University, encampment leaders declared, "We have Zionists who have entered the camp," before calling on protesters to link arms and surround Jews who had made their way inside.

The picture is troubling, but it also raises an unavoidable question: How have the major Jewish organizations responded to the rise of the anti-Zionist campus movement from its inception in the early 2000s? The short answer is: They haven't.

Indeed, the response—or lack thereof—from some of the world's largest and most well-funded Jewish organizations should be setting off alarm bells. American Jewish leadership, shaped by the assumptions of a Western liberal democracy, mislabeled anti-Zionism as mere political expression. In doing so, they failed to recognize it as an organized campaign designed to weaken the Jewish state while undoing the sacredness of Israel to the Jewish world. Without any substantive counter-response, university campuses have been left completely undefended.

Before the rise of organized anti-Zionist activism, refined as a propaganda instrument by Islamists and left-wing radicals, Jewish student life on campus was largely anchored by Hillels and Chabad centers. But these were not designed as advocacy, prevention or rapid-response bodies. Rather, their mission was to serve as a "home away from home," a space where students could observe Shabbat, have coffee and network, celebrate holidays, engage in Jewish learning and build social connections with other students. This institutional orientation is significant because Hillel was not structured to confront antisemitism or anti-Zionism as political or ideological movements.

When anti-Zionist activism began to gain traction on U.S. campuses, many Hillel professionals interpreted it as a form of

political criticism rather than as an expression of Jew-hatred. As a result, Jewish students who encountered and experienced anti-Zionist harassment and/or discrimination often experienced frustration at what they perceived as institutional inaction. Some reported being advised by Hillel staff to avoid confrontation or to refrain from drawing attention to the activities of groups such as Students for Justice in Palestine.

Because of this, initiatives such as Israel Apartheid Week were left unchecked, becoming routine, leading many Hillel chapters to adopt a sort of “parallel programming.” Rather than directly countering anti-Zionist events, they organized alternative activities intended to foster positive Jewish expression.

For instance, during Israel Apartheid Week hosted by academic departments at the University of California in Los Angeles, the campus Hillel organized a “peace arts and crafts fair” to channel student reactions into messages of coexistence and hope. Hillel has also routinely advised students not to protest or engage with anti-Zionist campus events, encouraging them instead to use Hillel as an “open door” for comfort and solace. The response to hostile anti-Zionism on campuses has, in effect, not been a response at all. It has become a retreat inward, characterized by withdrawal, de-escalation and the avoidance of direct action.

Similarly, the Anti-Defamation League, which first officially recognized that there may be an anti-Israel problem on campuses in 2010, framed anti-Zionism as something that may “cross the line into antisemitism” when it demonizes, delegitimizes or applies double standards to Israel. In doing so, they implicitly accepted anti-Zionism as a valid position that only occasionally goes too far. This framing has limited the ability to analyze the issue as an ideological hate movement designed to destroy Israel and Jewish life in the Diaspora.

This insistence on preserving wide latitude for criticism of Israel is distinctly American. The United States was founded on principles of rupture, dissent and the freedom to exercise political will. From the civil-rights movement to the anti-war protests of the 1960s, protest is embedded in the national ethos.

Americans are, in many ways, culturally conditioned to view political mobilization and public dissent as democratic virtues. Yet this very openness, America’s identity as a beacon of freedom, also renders it vulnerable to dangerous and deadly propaganda. Anti-Zionism, which is rooted in Soviet statecraft as a form of ideological warfare, entered the American landscape not as what it was but as what Americans were predisposed to see: legitimate political expression. In that sense, a product of state propaganda passed through the field of vision of a free society ill-equipped to confront blatant hatred veiled as discourse.

Even after the Hamas-led terrorist attacks in Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, when it became increasingly difficult to deny that anti-Zionism is an ideology that kills, American Jewish leadership has still not launched a sustained campaign against it. In fact, instead of launching a campaign against anti-Zionism, Jewish groups tasked with defending Jews, such as the ADL, strongly recommend not using the words “anti-Zionism” and “Zionism.” Every time Jews refuse or avoid using the word that precisely describes hate, they cede the battlefield and allow anti-Zionists to get away with their genocidal objectives.

Naming and confronting anti-Zionism requires a fundamental rethinking. It means recognizing anti-Zionism for what it is: a lethal ideology that seeks to destroy Israel precisely because it is a Jewish state. It also requires reclaiming Jewish nationhood as a core element of Jewish identity. If Jewish peoplehood and nationhood are not seen as integral to Jewish life, then attacks on the legitimacy of Israel can appear as fair game, rather than an assault on Jewish existence.

Jewish organizations often respond to blatantly libelous and antisemitic statements as “inflammatory,” “misleading” or “harmful to dialogue,” but they rarely identify the core root that produces those accusations. The result is a dangerous conceptual gap. When institutions say that anti-Zionism only becomes problematic when it “crosses a line,” they implicitly accept that anti-Zionism is fine up until a certain point.

The problem is not that anti-Zionism sometimes crosses a line. Anti-Zionism is the line. (JNS Mar 17)

Joe Kent Was a Problem of Trump’s Own Making

by Seth Mandel

Joe Kent no doubt served this country honorably during the Iraq war, but it is to America’s great benefit that he has now left his role as director of the National Counterterrorism Center. His worldview is a conspiracy-addled montage of easily debunked rage-bait hallucinations. I wish him the best of luck in all his future endeavors, so long as those endeavors are as far from government policymaking as is humanly possible.

Kent entered politics after the tragic death of his wife in an Islamic State suicide bombing in Syria in 2019. In his resignation letter—the classic Hail Mary play for media sympathy from a person who was probably going to be fired anyway—Kent blames Israel for the ISIS bombing. He also blames Israel for the Iraq war, which the Israeli government was famously opposed to.

Kent’s political journey is instructive. In 2022 he saw an opportunity when Washington state’s six-term Republican representative, Jaime Herrera Beutler, voted to impeach Donald Trump. Kent ousted Beutler in the primary and then lost the seat to the Democrats. His general election loss to Marie Gluesenkamp Perez came after revelations that he “courted prominent white nationalists and posed recently for a photograph with a media personality who has previously described Adolf Hitler as a ‘complicated historical figure’ who ‘many people misunderstand.’”

Kent took a second shot at Perez two years later and lost again. His loyalty to Trump at the expense of the Republican Party was rewarded with a federal job close to Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard. While Gabbard has been able to temper her isolationist leanings, Kent apparently had had enough.

His resignation letter is a remarkable document, perfect for the right-wing’s podcast-bro laziness and Jews-on-the-brain paranoia.

“Early in this administration, high-ranking Israeli officials and influential members of the American media deployed a misinformation campaign that wholly undermined your America First platform and sowed pro-war sentiments to encourage a war with Iran,” Kent writes. “This echo chamber was used to deceive you into believing that Iran posed an imminent threat to the United States, and that should you strike now, there was a clear path to swift victory. This was a lie and is the same tactic the Israelis used to draw us into the disastrous Iraq war that cost our nation the lives of thousands of our best men and women.”

It’s as if somebody wrote a resignation letter twenty years ago and then put it on ice for just the right moment.

Obviously Trump is untroubled by losing someone with Kent’s sparkling personality and airtight judgment. “I always thought he was a nice guy, but I always thought he was weak on security, very weak,” Trump told reporters, according to the Hill. “When I read his statement I realized it’s a good thing that he’s out, because he said Iran is not a threat. ... Every country realized what a threat Iran was.”

This is, of course, not about whether Iran is a threat. Kent is applying for membership in the microphone muftis, the conservative podcasters obsessed with Israel.

But it is worth pointing out that while Trump is obviously on the right side of this argument with Kent, the whole affair is still a consequence of Trump’s own antics—his atrocious behavior on January 6, 2021; his rewarding of those who backed the Capitol riot, thereby incentivizing the GOP to run and nominate loons like Kent; and his decision to staff various national-security offices with loyalists whose suspicion of establishment agencies outweighed their analytical rigor.

The result is that you end up with an administration staffed by people like Joe Kent, who are wholly unqualified for national-security jobs and who may be undermining their policy shop during wartime. It’s to everyone’s benefit that Trump can clear the tinfoil hat brigade out of government when he wants to. Now he just needs to pick up that pace—and stop hiring such folks to begin with. (Commentary.org Mar 17)