



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...

Netanyahu, Orbán and Trump Defy ICC, and a Morally Bankrupt Global Order By Alex Traidman

In a stunning announcement, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán announced on Thursday that Hungary would withdraw from the International Criminal Court. The announcement was made during a joint press conference with visiting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The ICC had issued an arrest warrant for Netanyahu and his then Defense Minister Yoav Gallant back in November, citing alleged "crimes against humanity of murder, persecution, and other inhumane acts." The warrants were issued despite the fact that Hamas launched the war on Israel with an unprovoked massacre on Oct. 7, 2023, killing some 1,200, including hundreds of civilians in their homes, and kidnapping over 250 Israelis. Fifty-nine Israelis remain in captivity in the Gaza Strip.

Throughout the war, the IDF has gone to lengths greater than any other military in history to reduce civilian casualties. It is an achievement that will be studied for years to come by militaries around the world, made even more impressive by the lengths Hamas has gone to increase its own civilian casualties by hiding and embedding its terrorists among the civilian population and infrastructure. In addition, Israel has facilitated unprecedented levels of humanitarian aid to Gaza.

These efforts did not prevent the ICC from issuing the warrants. Nor did ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan, who is currently being investigated for sexual misconduct, take Israel up on its offer to show him firsthand how it works day in and day out to reduce and eliminate civilian casualties.

It is widely understood that Hamas never expected to defeat Israel on the military battleground, even when that battleground is the highly booby-trapped, densely populated urban fighting environment that is Gaza.

Hamas's strategy from the beginning was to kill, rape and maim Israelis, and take such a large number of hostages that Israel would be compelled to declare war and enter Gaza. Once that happened, Hamas posited that Israel would not be able to conduct its military operations without killing large numbers of Gazan civilians.

As death tolls would rise, Palestinians would use media and social media to turn global public opinion against Israel. And international agencies, dominated by the globalist left, would take actions—including trying Israel for genocide at the International Court of Justice, and issuing arrest warrants for Israeli leaders or soldiers at the ICC—that would pressure Israel into stopping the war before its war aims were achieved. Then a battered but not eliminated Hamas terror organization could claim a victory over one of the world's most technologically-advanced and battle-ready militaries.

And while the strategy has worked to a large extent, Netanyahu has withstood immense pressure from all corners, outside Israel and within, to stop the war before achieving the return of all remaining hostages, and removing Hamas as a military and governing force in the Gaza Strip.

This pressure was backed in large part by the Biden administration, which continuously hedged its policies against Israel, despite certain statements and actions of support. The Biden team paved the path toward weapons embargoes against Israel by withholding key munitions, and paved the path toward widescale economic sanctions by placing its own sanctions on Israelis who it believed opposed American policies. It made no difference that these Israelis, including a battalion of Orthodox soldiers, were never convicted of any crime.

The Biden administration similarly allowed the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice to ratchet up pressure on Israel, by launching ludicrous charges of genocide and war

crimes.

Yet with the re-election of Donald Trump as U.S. president and the recent actions of Viktor Orbán, Netanyahu is not only proving that his travel can extend well beyond Israel's borders, but that Israel can win its just war on the

physical battlefield and on the diplomatic one as well.

Among numerous other reversals of Biden administration policies, including the restoring of weapons flow to Israel, and the removal of the aforementioned sanctions against innocent Israelis, Trump imposed his own sanctions on Karim Khan, lead prosecutor of the ICC, in February.

In doing, the White House declared that "the ICC has, without a legitimate basis, asserted jurisdiction over and opened preliminary investigations concerning personnel of the United States and certain of its allies, including Israel, and has further abused its power by issuing baseless arrest warrants targeting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Minister of Defense Yoav Gallant. ... This malign conduct in turn threatens to infringe upon the sovereignty of the United States and undermines the critical national security and foreign policy work of the United States government and our allies, including Israel."

The February declaration made clear that the action was not expected to be unilateral. "The United States unequivocally opposes and expects our allies to oppose any ICC actions against the United States, Israel or any other ally of the United States that has not consented to ICC jurisdiction."

In declaring that Hungary would withdraw from the ICC, Orbán made clear that he stands with America and Israel against the globalist left-wing international order. The ICC "has been diminished to a political tool and Hungary wishes to play no role in it," he stated Thursday.

Standing up against the progressive order is a position that he has grown accustomed to taking.

Orbán has systematically stood up against European Union policies that have sought to reduce the national cultures and policies of disparate European nations in favor of policies selected for them by a continental elite sitting in Brussels and other Western European capitals. In particular, Orbán has thoroughly rejected the policies of forced Muslim immigration that are devastating European countries that opened their borders.

It is no coincidence therefore that Hungary, home to Europe's third-largest Jewish community, is the safest country in Europe for Jewish residents and tourists.

Orbán's stand against detrimental E.U. policies has been a core pillar of his domestic support. His principled actions to reject widespread Muslim immigration, and to protect Hungary's thriving Jewish community, have also made Budapest one of the most pleasant and safest European capitals to visit.

Unlike visits even to the United States, Netanyahu and his entourage have yet to encounter a single protester during his visit to Hungary. Israeli flags are flying on national buildings and on the bridges crossing the Danube River. Had Netanyahu touched down in London, Paris, Rome or Berlin the encounter would have been less welcoming, and may have ended in an arrest.

Netanyahu is grateful for the friendship displayed by Orbán, for his hospitality and principled stand. "You stand with us at the E.U. You stand with us at the U.N. And you've just taken a bold and principled position on the ICC, and I thank you, Viktor. This is not only important for us, it's important for all democracies," the Israeli leader said.

Netanyahu, who has provided global leadership in a period where the Western world has all but given in to Islamic radicalism, noted correctly that Orbán's move was not only one for Hungary, for Israel, or for currying favor with the Trump administration.

Orbán's bold move is likely to be followed by others, Netanyahu said. "You are the first, I dare to say, I don't think the last, but the first state that walks out of this corruption and this darkness. And I think it'll be deeply appreciated, not only in Israel, but in many, many countries around the world."

In thanking Orbán, Netanyahu noted that Hungary's withdrawal from the ICC is a stand "for all of civilization as we fight this battle against barbarism."

All those who stand against Islamic radicalism and a progressive globalist order have Netanyahu, Trump and Orbán to thank.
(JNS Apr 3)

What 'At All Costs' Really Means By Hillel Frisch

In the wake of the unrelenting media campaign to return the hostages being held in the Gaza Strip "at any cost," discussion of the potential consequences has all but vanished. Should Israel agree to implement the second phase of the ceasefire with Hamas, there would be four negative outcomes:

- 1) It would strengthen Hamas's standing amongst Palestinians and its jihadist project among Palestinians and throughout the Muslim world;
- 2) Israel would lose key strategic assets;
- 3) Hamas's power and control in Gaza would be restored;
- 4) Israel would face the prospect of increased military casualties and long-term economic costs.

To mitigate this heavy price, Israel must leverage the assets at its disposal: control over the supply of aid to Gaza; the capability to use significant military force against Hamas; the ability to prevent the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Gaza; and the backing provided by U.S. President Donald Trump for Israeli measures designed to exert pressure on Hamas regarding the release of hostages.

The consequences of accepting Hamas's terms on the Palestinians and the Muslim world:

Paying "any cost" for the hostages' release effectively means accepting Hamas's continued effective control over Gaza, accompanied by the lifting of the blockade and the extensive release of Palestinian terrorists from prison. Hamas would be able to portray such an outcome as a significant achievement and as proof of the legitimacy of the jihadist project, despite the many casualties both the terror organization and the Gaza population have incurred and the extensive damage to Gaza's infrastructure. This message will bolster support for Hamas and its methods not only within the Palestinian arena but throughout the Muslim world. Although the severe blow dealt to the Iranian axis mitigates the effects of such an achievement, it will nonetheless reinvigorate Iran and its allies.

On Feb. 23, just over a month after signing the ceasefire agreement (on Jan. 19), we received a stark reminder of the consequences of relinquishing the Netzarim Corridor, which divides the Strip into two, and enabling residents of Gaza City and the northern Gaza Strip to return to their homes. For the first time since the ground operation began in late October 2023, the northern Gaza envelope was placed on its highest alert level amid concerns over a potential terrorist infiltration.

The reasons for this are easy to understand. After signing the agreement, tens of thousands moved unhindered along the coastal road northward on foot and in carts. Hundreds of the thousands no doubt were terrorists whose weapons were concealed. On the other route—the Salah al-Din Road intended for vehicle passage—the monitoring carried out by American inspectors was clearly insufficient. A report by the Saudi Al-Hadath channel documented approximately 10 vehicles undergoing inspection every half hour—three minutes per vehicle loaded with equipment. The actual inspection time was much shorter as vehicles had to enter and exit the inspection site and unload and upload their many passengers. Furthermore, the inspection area lacked a pit from which personnel could examine the undersides of vehicles.

Perhaps the most serious consequence of the deal for Israel is the political and military empowerment of Hamas and other terrorist organizations. By the seventh stage of the first of three planned phases of the deal, Israel had released more than 300 prisoners sentenced to life imprisonment—more than were released in the 2011 Gilad Shalit exchange (280 prisoners serving life sentences). Some of these murderous terrorists are viewed as the elite of Palestinian society: individuals who successfully planned attacks, evaded capture by the Israel Security Agency and Israel Defense Forces, found accomplices who would not betray them, and coolly executed their terrorist acts. For example, in the seventh stage that concluded phase one, Israel freed Abd al-Nasser Issa (born 1969), one of the founders of Hamas's

military wing, considered a natural successor to Mohammed Deif as the next commander of the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades.

To gauge the meaning of the release of such prisoners, one has only to recall the role of those released in the Shalit deal in the execution of the Oct. 7 massacre. Notably, Yahya Sinwar—the chief architect of the Oct. 7 massacre—was among those released in exchange for Shalit, along with at least 10 senior Hamas operatives from both the political and military leadership.

Prominent among the political echelon was Ruhi Mushtaha, who, alongside Sinwar, established Hamas's internal security apparatus, responsible, among other things, for executing Palestinians accused of collaboration with Israel. Following his release, Mushtaha became a member of Hamas's political bureau and, according to security sources, was among the five top Hamas leaders who decided on the Oct. 7 attack and its timing. Another senior prisoner released in that deal, though not sentenced to life imprisonment, was Husam Badran, who was appointed a senior member of Hamas's political bureau.

Senior operational figures released in the Shalit deal include Zaher Jabarin, one of the planners behind the kidnapping and murder of Border Police officer Nissim Toledano. Jabarin became deputy to Saleh al-Aroui, head of Hamas's military operations in Judea and Samaria, and succeeded him after Israel assassinated al-Aroui. Jihad Yaghmour, responsible for the 1994 kidnapping of Nachshon Wachsman, also worked closely with al-Aroui in Hamas's representation in Turkey.

Prisoners released in the Shalit deal have been particularly influential in Hamas's "West Bank command" in Gaza, designed to direct and support Hamas terror activities in Judea and Samaria. Notable among them are Yassin Rabi'a, head of the command; Khwailid Ramadan, who participated in the 1998 shooting in Yitzhar, in which two Israelis were murdered; Khaled al-Najjar, a former member of the "Silwad cell" (a village near Ofra) that murdered Zvi Goldstein and Shuli Har-Melech, husband of Limor, who was severely wounded in the attack and now serves as a Knesset member. Another command member, Mahmoud Kawasmeh, was involved in planning the murder of three Israeli teenagers—Yaakov Naftali Frenkel, Gilad Shaer and Eyal Yifrach—a terror attack that set off a chain of events that led to "Operation Protective Edge" in summer 2014. Kawasmeh had been in charge of Hamas in the West Bank. Additionally, Abdul Aziz Salha, involved in the lynching of two IDF soldiers in Ramallah in October 2000, was also among those released in the Shalit deal.

An important document published by Al-Jazeera and by Hamas websites lists seven supposed strategic achievements by Hamas. According to the document, the foremost achievement is the release of senior prisoners, especially those sentenced to life imprisonment. Hamas anticipates the deal's subsequent stages will result in the release of all 600 prisoners sentenced to life, including prominent leaders such as Fatah's Marwan Barghouti and Ahmad Saadat of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Including these names is intended to demonstrate that Hamas operates for the broader Palestinian cause. However, Hamas's true objective is to rebuild its leadership and senior command ranks—severely weakened during the conflict—by drawing from this substantial and "high-caliber" pool of released prisoners.

From Israel's standpoint, the influx of terrorists and weapons, together with the reestablishment of a densely populated environment in northern Gaza, recreates the strategic conditions that prevailed prior to the Oct. 7 massacre. It is likely that, between the implementation of the hostage deal and the resumption of hostilities, Hamas will fortify its positions—potentially forcing Israel to contend with combat conditions similar to those during the initial breach from late October through November 2023. In that first month alone, 89 soldiers fell in combat, compared to an average of 22 per month in subsequent months.

The scale and type of forces needed for renewed incursions carry immense economic and fiscal consequences. The required forces included approximately 300,000 soldiers, mostly reservists, whose salaries matched or exceeded their civilian incomes. According to the financial adviser to the IDF Chief of Staff, speaking at a November 2024 conference, the direct monthly cost of a reservist called up under an emergency order averaged 29,000 shekels (\$7,845), compared to only 3,374 shekels (\$913) for active-duty soldiers.

Beyond fiscal burdens, indirect economic costs are significant, given that this high-caliber workforce is engaged in combat rather than productive economic activity. A sociological breakdown of reservists reveals a strong correlation between combat service, high education and income levels, with most combat reservists originating from upper socioeconomic deciles.

The media campaign has consistently amplified the hostage families' calls for their release "at any cost." It is therefore hardly surprising that the price of this deal is extraordinarily high. Given the loss of strategic assets, the future cost of another military incursion into Gaza—should hostilities resume—will also be considerable. Hamas will also be able to significantly replenish its leadership ranks.

To mitigate these heavy costs, Israel must leverage its available assets: control over aid supplies to Gaza; the capability to deploy substantial military force against Hamas; the capacity to obstruct Gaza's reconstruction; and President Trump's support for Israeli measures aimed at pressuring Hamas over hostage releases. (Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security Apr 2)

The Trump-MBS Strategy for a Secure and Prosperous Middle East By Dan Diker and Dalia Ziada

The political environment in Washington has changed dramatically in the opening months of 2025, reflecting the concerns and ambitions of Israel and its Arab neighbors under the pressure of ongoing Iranian regime-driven escalation across the Middle East. As the Jerusalem Center for Security and Foreign Affairs team witnessed in recent meetings with high-profile policy formulators in Washington, D.C., the Islamic regime in Iran and its extended militia network is an arch enemy not only to Israel and Arab states, but also to the United States and the West.

To confront the Iranian threat, ensure Israel's security and Arab prosperity, and bring long-term stability to the Middle East, a new coordination framework is being fostered between U.S. President Donald Trump and Saudi Arabia's crown prince, Mohammad Bin Salman (MBS). The "Trump-MBS mandate for the Middle East," as we would like to coin it, appears promising, given the two leaders' pragmatic approaches to the region's chronic geopolitical and ideological challenges.

Under the first term of the Trump administration (2017-2021), U.S.-Israel relations saw unprecedented alignment as Washington policymakers emphasized an ironclad commitment to the security of the State of Israel. The first step toward this goal was the successful push to integrate Israel into the regional, political and security ecosystem as an indigenous member of the Arab Muslim majority Middle East. The historic signing of the Abraham Accords (2020) between Israel and Arab Gulf countries the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain was a game changer. It showed that Arabs and Israel could work together and has removed the "imperialist West agent" label wrongly stamped by Arab communist and Islamist ideologues on the forehead of the Jewish democratic state since its establishment in 1948. For the first time, in 2021, Israel was moved from the operation zone of the U.S. Army's European Command to its natural place in the U.S. Army's Central Command alongside its Arab neighbors.

Trump's second term has come at a highly challenging time for Israel, which has yet to recover from the aftermath of Hamas's Oct. 7, 2023 invasion-massacre-kidnapping while engaging diverse enemies on seven fronts. On the domestic front, Israel has been involved in a grinding war against local terrorist organizations like Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad in Gaza and the West Bank for more than 17 months. At the borders, Israel has been fighting Iran's most powerful militias, Hezbollah and the Houthis, and their widely spread factions in the Levant. Israel has not only been fighting for its own survival, but it is also exerting a tremendous effort to protect the Druze and Christian minorities on its border with Syria against the rise of Salafi-Jihadist groups following the fall of the Assad regime. The 8th front—the disinformation war Israel has been fighting in media, social networks, and international arenas—is no less challenging.

Nevertheless, the Trump administration is still interested in keeping the Abraham Accords train moving forward as a guarantee of Israel's security in the long term. The end of terrorism and creating stability in the Middle East region is pivotal for U.S. geo-strategic and economic interests. In this regard, Israel's normalization with Saudi

Arabia and Lebanon, respectively, are open folders on Trump's desk.

The potential for Israel's normalization with Lebanon has captured the interest of American and Middle Eastern media over the past few months, following Israel's astonishing success in neutralizing more than 10,000 Hezbollah operatives and the consequent installation of a relatively friendly government in Beirut. Yet, it is difficult to predict that Israel-Lebanon normalization could happen in the near future. Hezbollah is weakened but not annihilated. The ideological and political impact of the strongest Iran-sponsored militia on the Lebanese Shi'ite population, who comprise almost one-third of the country's population, is consequential. Despite financial constraints due to U.S.-imposed sanctions on Iranian oil exports, Iran is still pouring money into southern Lebanon in the hope of reviving Hezbollah.

On the other side, the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) is divided internally on an ideological basis between the Maronites, Sunni Muslims and Shi'ite Muslims, who are equally represented in its command structure. The ideological backgrounds of LAF commanders have complicated the decisions on LAF operations, especially when it comes to cooperation with Israel vs. cooperation with Hezbollah. In addition, the LAF has not fully taken control of the southern territories, where Hezbollah still has a stronghold.

Therefore, Israel's best strategy regarding Lebanon for the time being, which enjoys U.S. support, is to expand its defensible borders with Lebanon well beyond the withdrawal line (the blue line) demarcated by the United Nations between Lebanon and Israel in the summer of 2000. Currently, the buffer zone between Israel and Lebanon is barely one kilometer wide. It must extend to an area similar to the 15-kilometer buffer zone that Israel recently secured on its borders with Syria to guard against any potential attacks from the recently installed jihadist-led government.

In a broader context, normalization agreements between Israel and Arab Gulf states have been proven to be the most effective cornerstone of Trump's strategy for a stable and productive Middle East. Unlike Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, which are still overwhelmed with the barren communist and damaging Islamist ideologies that have complicated their relationship with Israel for decades, Arab Gulf states are more forward-thinking and mostly pragmatic when it comes to cooperation with Israel and the United States. In that context, the potential of normalization between Israel and Saudi Arabia seems to be more attainable than we think.

The Trump administration's close coordination with Saudi Arabia on regional issues, such as the conflicts in Gaza, Lebanon and Syria, and the United States empowering Saudi Arabia to influence international matters—like its role in the negotiations between Russia and Ukraine—represent a significant first step toward encouraging Saudi Arabia to overcome ideological prejudices and historical Arab biases against Israel. This could prime Saudi Arabia to lead the Middle East region into a new era where Israel and Arab nations coexist as normal neighbors.

The Levant and the Red Sea are two clear and immediate manifestations of the Trump-MBS mandate. Saudi Arabia played a crucial role in facilitating U.S. efforts to stabilize Syria amid horrific reports of genocidal attacks on Alawites and Christians in western Syria. Accelerating the negotiation between the Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and the Syrian jihadist-led government was crucial in that regard. While the Saudis worked with the new Syrian leadership to accelerate the deal, our Kurdish intelligence sources reveal that SDF leader Mazloum Abdi was flown to Damascus in an American helicopter to sign the agreement with Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa. The Americans' deep interest in stabilizing Syria and the Saudis' impressive coordination with the United States in this regard demonstrate a calculated approach to weakening Iran's grip on Syria and the Levant region.

In the Red Sea, Saudi-American cooperation is degrading the Houthis militia in Yemen, another strong arm of the Islamic Regime in Iran. In early 2024 and into 2025, the U.S. Central Command conducted targeted strikes against the Houthis in response to their aggression on American and European trade vessels passing through the Red Sea. In recent weeks, Trump intensified the attacks on the Houthis as part of his strategy and pledge to provide Saudi Arabia and Arab Gulf states with the security they need to resume their economic endeavors, which directly serves U.S. economic interests.

For decades, the Houthis directly threatened the national security of Saudi Arabia, UAE and Egypt. By taking action in Yemen, the Trump administration not only reinforced its commitment to regional stability but also sent a clear message to Tehran that Iranian-backed threats would not be overlooked anymore.

Beyond military cooperation, U.S.-Saudi relations have been profoundly shaped by economic factors. Historically, Saudi Arabia has invested billions into the U.S. economy, particularly in energy, technology and infrastructure, via the Kingdom's sovereign wealth fund, the Public Investment Fund (PIF). In 2017, during Trump's first visit to Riyadh, the Saudi leadership earmarked investments of \$110 billion in arms deals and about \$350 billion in civilian sectors. During a call with Trump in January 2025, MBS declared Saudi's intention to invest \$600 billion in the United States over the next four years of Trump's administration. Additionally, in what appears to be a gesture of appreciation for Trump's dedication to Middle East stability and security, the UAE pledged \$1.4 trillion in investments in the United States' technology sectors in mid-March.

As the geopolitical landscape continues to evolve, the Trump-MBS strategy's long-term effectiveness remains to be seen. However, its immediate impact is clear: Iran is facing unprecedented pressure, Saudi Arabia is securing its regional interests, Israel is given the space and support needed to proceed with its multi-front war, and U.S. influence in the Middle East remains strong. Whether this strategy will lead to lasting peace or simply manage ongoing conflict is a question that will shape the region's future for years to come.

(Jerusalem Center for Security and Foreign Affairs Mar 31)

Methinks the Left Doth Protest Too Much By Ruthie Blum

In a letter obtained last week by Israel Insider, Reps. Jim Jordan (R-Ohio) and Brian Mast (R-Fla.)—the chairs of the U.S. House of Representatives Judiciary and Foreign Affairs committees, respectively—requested of the Jewish Communal Fund, Middle East Dialogue Network, Movement for Quality Government in Israel, PEF Israel Endowment Funds, Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, and Blue and White Future that they “produce all documents and information” about dubious practices vis-à-vis Israel.

The March 26 missive to the heads of the above organizations got right to the point in the first paragraph.

“According to reports, the Biden-Harris administration funneled U.S. taxpayer money to certain Israeli entities with the effect of attempting to undermine Israel's democratically elected government,” it began, with a footnote referencing two JNS articles—one by Caroline Glick and the other by David Isaac.

The former, published Feb. 17, 2023, showed that the left-wing Israeli NGO, the Movement for Quality Government (MQG), had been receiving money from the U.S. State Department. And it was using the cash, among other things, for “democracy education” in Israeli high schools.

As Glick noted, “Since MQG's primary activity is subverting democracy in Israel by waging lawfare and sowing chaos in a bid to block democratically elected right-wing governments from fulfilling their pledges to voters, it's fairly clear that when MQG refers to ‘democracy education,’ it doesn't mean majority rule.”

Isaac's piece, which appeared on Feb. 18 this year, showed how Elon Musk's efforts to “expose waste and misuse of funds” by “America's administrative state” led to the emergence of reports that the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) had been heavily funding the anti-government judicial-reform protests in Israel.

This, explained Isaac, “led Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to ... blast what he called the ‘almost inconceivable’ amounts of foreign money that drove the protest movement.”

The letter by Jordan and Mast went on to stress that the “use of federal grants in this manner not only jeopardizes America's relationship with one of its closest allies, but also undermines core civil liberties protected within the United States and Israel. Additionally, the misuse of federal grant funds may, in some cases, amount to a criminal offense.”

Jordan and Mast then clarified the impetus for their probe.

“In 2023, Israel experienced widespread protests over the government's plan to reform the country's judicial system,” they wrote. “The Biden-Harris administration openly opposed the proposed

reforms, with President Biden saying that Israel ‘cannot continue down this road.’ Media reports later revealed that these protests were funded in part by U.S. grant money that had been funneled through various American and Israeli NGOs to groups directing the protests.”

They proceeded to specify that, “according to public media reports, in 2023, Blue and White Future, ‘an Israeli NGO that funded and ran the headquarters for the coalition of groups opposing judicial reform,’ received approximately \$4 million from a U.S.-based NGO, Middle East Peace Dialogue Network (MEPDN) through the Jewish Communal Fund and Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors.”

This, said Jordan and Mast, “was not the first time U.S. taxpayer-funded grants had been used to support protests against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu or the policies he supports.”

Unfortunately, they added, “these reports reflect the poor track record of USAID and the State Department in funding entities in the region. USAID and the State Department have even provided direct support to Hamas and other terrorist groups. From 2007 through 2024, USAID and the State Department sent at least \$122 million to NGOs aligned with designated terrorist organizations. Many of those NGOs have openly espoused antisemitic rhetoric and encouraged violence against Jewish individuals.”

The letter concluded with a detailed list of the data demanded by Congress, which “has an important interest in ensuring that taxpayer-funded grants are used in a manner that is consistent with statutory authorization and congressional intent.”

An investigation into the money trail from Team Biden to the Israeli machine still operating to topple Netanyahu should cause the movement's radical engineers to shake in their Birkenstocks. After all, full-page ads in newspapers cost a fortune.

Ditto for highway banners, tents, flags and loudspeaker systems. And let's not forget the hundreds of Handmaid's Tale costumes signifying the plight that awaits Israeli women in the event that a modicum of balance is restored to the branches of government.

Having the flow of dollars severed would put a real damper on their ongoing campaign, which has come to include enveloping many of the hostage families with a dangerous bear hug. To make matters worse for the devious NGOs in question, Channel 14's Tamir Morag reported on Monday that MQG chairman Eliad Shraga and Blue and White Future CEO Eran Schwartz are expected to be summoned by Congress for questioning.

Schwartz promptly rejected claims that he and his “anybody but Bibi” buddies were abetted in their endeavors by the Biden administration. He's probably counting on the difficulty that the likes of Jordan and Mast will have in drawing a direct link between the coffers of one “charity” with a political agenda to another.

This is likely the same reason that then-State Department Principal Deputy Spokesperson Vedant Patel was confident in his own denial about his office's funding of the Israeli protest movement. In a press briefing on March 27, 2023, he expressed righteous indignation at the very suggestion.

“Any notion that we are propping up or supporting these protests or the initiators of them is completely and demonstrably false,” he said. “The Movement of Quality Government ... received a modest grant from the State Department that was initiated during the previous administration, and the latest disbursement of funds came in September of 2022, prior to the most recent Israeli elections. And this grant supported an educational program for Jerusalem schools that supplemented their civic-studies curriculum.”

The timeline is laughable. MQG is but one leftist NGO that's been staging anti-Netanyahu demonstrations for years. And Shraga appears so often before Israel's High Court of Justice to represent petitioners against all things Bibi-related that he's reached the celebrity status of a reality-TV star.

It remains to be seen whether Jordan and Mast will succeed at extinguishing this particular aspect of USAID's wasteful, often pernicious, activities. But it's a relief to have the powers-that-be in Washington put a stop to the gaslighting.

Indeed, to borrow from Queen Gertrude in Shakespeare's “Hamlet,” the left “doth protest too much, methinks.” Literally and figuratively. (JNS Mar 31)
