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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...

The Wonder that is Israel

By Boaz Bismuth

Anyone who is willing to look up for a moment from the hardships of politics and the coronavirus and examine the success of the project called the State of Israel from a broad historical perspective knows that it deserves to be crowned a resounding success.

Anyone who prefers—and there are quite a few—to assess the state of the nation based on the media headlines will soon find themselves longing for the Stone Age. It seems that complaining is very fashionable these days in the political-media sphere. I'm not the first one to say this: Our national sport is grumbling. But recently, we have raised it into an art form. We are champions at painting everything in bleak shades of failure and omission. Every mishap is seen as a "crisis," any frustration intensifies into an "outcry," and we are convinced that every difficulty is the "end of the Third Temple."

True, the never-ending election cycle creates a sense that everything is stuck, and that the chosen people has become the choosing people. It's exhausting and discouraging. After all, what did we ask for? A functioning government and leaders willing to work together for the public after four elections? Not to mention the coronavirus that wreaked havoc on us, leaving us stifled and with heavy hearts, creating a persistent feeling of helplessness.

Still, the past year's challenges and difficulties aside, some proportion is in order. The Israeli government, rattled by political chaos and consecutive elections campaigns, has been able to mount a most impressive immunization drive, and even with COVID-19 holding it back, was able to bring about four peace agreements and, according to some reports and speculations, is also able to show our neighbors and the whole world that we know and intend to defend ourselves. So maybe, just maybe, not everything is so awful.

With respect to proportions (historical ones also), I think of the things that previous generations have faced: existential and bloody wars, terrible waves of terror, periods of austerity and economic crises. Each generation has its burden to bear. I'm not sure I would rush to trade places.

They keep telling us it was different back then. There was solidarity, brotherhood, a sense of joint destiny and a shared objective. That is both true and untrue.

I remember myself as a child, watching with excitement Israel's military parade on its 25th birthday. I remember how proud my parents were. There were those who came to the parade on foot and those who parked not far from it, having driven a fancy American car (those were the days when only the few could afford to own a car, and American cars particularly were considered a luxury).

It's not that there were no social tensions, and it's not that inequality was less troubling. But when it came to the state, there was indeed a sense of partnership: The state was ours—all of us—equally. Who then thought in terms of "they stole my country" or "give me back the old and beautiful Israel"? And it's also true that with a red party card you "belonged" a little more and you had a few more friends in the right places, but my parents, who preferred Menachem Begin, didn't feel for a moment that they were cut off from events, joys and the national experience.

They keep telling us it was different then. There was solidarity, brotherhood, a sense of joint destiny and a shared objective. That is both true and untrue.

That sense of partnership, I feel, has been somewhat eroded. No, I'm not questioning anyone's patriotism or love of country. We all—right and left, secular and religious, First Israel and Second Israel, Jews and Arabs—care about this country equally. And yet, there is a sense that we feel it's ours on a limited basis.

Perhaps it is the political thriller that refuses to end or the fact that personal politics now takes precedence over ideology. Perhaps it's just

an impression that is amplified due to the culture of social media, with its virulence and aggression. A feeling that if "our" side doesn't run the show, then it is no longer "the same country." A feeling that "they have taken over" and that "my country has

changed its nature"; that if we do not lead then we are less proud of the country, the state, the people.

And that is, perhaps, more than any exaggerated myth about "racism" and "apartheid," something we should strive to correct before it becomes a rift. Bring back the sense of belonging and partnership that transcend all controversy and rivalries.

If someone had told my great-grandfather what kind of trouble our generation would encounter, he would surely not have believed it. At the same time, even if ever imagined that his country would become a military and intelligence powerhouse—that it would be the "startup nation" and a technological power, that it would solve the water crisis and be close to achieving energy independence, that it would forge warm alliances with other nations in the region, becoming a light onto the nations in the time of global crisis—he would have kept it to himself lest he be committed to a mental institution.

So for my great-grandfather—and his friends and contemporaries, and for the generations that will one day call us ancestors—let us insist on sparing no effort so that all of us, each and every one of us, continue to be proud of being Israeli and proud of our country. We have all the reasons in the world to be proud. Happy Independence Day! (Israel Hayom Apr 15)

The Troubling US Deflection of Israel's Concerns on Iran

By David M. Weinberg

In March 2012, unnamed U.S. diplomats and military intelligence officials exposed Israel Defense Forces and Mossad activities in Azerbaijan, a Muslim country that borders Iran. "The Israelis have bought an airfield," a senior administration official was quoted as telling Foreign Policy magazine, "and the airfield is called Azerbaijan."

This Obama administration orchestrated leak—the "outing" of Israel's covert capabilities in Azerbaijan—was meant to scuttle the possibility of an Israeli airstrike on Iran's nuclear facilities from former Soviet airbases near Baku, only 500 kilometers from Tehran. Of course, Azerbaijan was forced to deny any Israeli presence and then scale back whatever intelligence or military basing Israel had there.

It was an ugly and underhanded move by the Obama administration.

As the contours of the controversial 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) nuclear deal with Iran later emerged, the Obama administration launched a hostile whispering campaign about Israel and its Jewish allies in the United States (orchestrated by then-president Obama's aide, deputy national security adviser Ben Rhodes).

Israel was standing in the way of an "amicable nuclear deal" with Iran and "dragging the U.S. into war," it was alleged. American Jews, Republicans and others opposed to the soft deal with Iran were accused of disloyalty to America, of favoring Israeli interests over crucial U.S. security interests.

The pro-Iran-deal chorus was mobilized to repeat these messages. Rhodes himself braggingly highlighted the "echo chamber" he created for this purpose, which encompassed journalists, left-wing think tanks and other opinion leaders. Rhodes boasted that he had snowed the "know nothing" media and the American public with a misleading narrative about the timeline of Washington's negotiations with Tehran and other key facets of the deal.

Alas, it seems that the Biden administration is using the same playbook to sideline Israel in the context of Washington's current talks with Iran to re-engage the JCPOA.

Instead of the "full and close coordination" with Israel and America's Arab allies regarding Iran that was promised by the new

administration, we are getting disinformation, deflection and early signs of a defamation campaign coming from Washington.

Last week, an “American official” outed an Israeli commando strike on a ship used as a sea base by Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) in the Red Sea off the coasts of Yemen and Djibouti. Biden administration sources leaked the story to The New York Times, clearly accusing Israel of causing trouble while nuclear peace talks with Iran were underway.

Netanyahu understood exactly what the administration was trying to do, and responded immediately. “We have to curb Iranian aggression in our region, and this threat is not a theoretical matter,” he said. “We know how to defend ourselves by ourselves from those who seek to kill us.”

And in case anybody misunderstood the context, Netanyahu added that “the danger that Iran will return—and this time with an international imprimatur—to a path that will allow it to develop a nuclear arsenal, is on our doorstep on this very day. We cannot go back to the dangerous nuclear plan.”

U.S. deflection of Israel’s concerns about Iran was expressed this week in additional ways. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken called Israeli Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi to vent about Palestinian human and civil rights “that must be equal with those of Israelis.” Then the administration announced plans to re-fund the Palestinians, to the tune of \$250 million, including renewal of aid through the corrupt UNRWA.

Then the administration announced plans to rejoin the horribly hostile-to-Israel UNHCR and to revoke sanctions against chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court Fatou Bensouda (even though she just launched an outrageous “criminal investigation” into Israel).

At the same time, the administration has distanced itself from the Abraham Accords and has frozen some of the promises made by the Trump administration to Arab countries that committed themselves to peace with Israel.

While each of these American actions may have standalone rationalizations, the cumulative effect is to put Israel on the defensive—and I think that is exactly what the administration intends. Israel is being warned not to be too pushy about Iran policy or else the administration can pester Israel diplomatically in ways that will pinch.

This week, the Biden administration also is launching its own “Bibi-sitting” exercise, with Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin coming to soothe the concerns of Netanyahu and Defense Minister Benny Gantz. It is not at all coincidental that this first cabinet-level visit of a Biden administration official comes at the time that talks with the Iranians are taking place (publicly in Vienna, and perhaps secretly elsewhere too).

I hope that Austin is authorized to discuss real policy with Jerusalem, not just hold the hands of Netanyahu and Gantz and warn them to back off.

And then there are some early signs of a defamation campaign coming from Washington. Joe Cirincione penned an NBC News op-ed this week in which he warned against the return of the old anti-Iran deal “coalition,” including hawks in Congress, the leaders of Israel and Saudi Arabia, and by insinuation also evangelical Christians and American Jews, whose “money and influence” could ruin everything for the Biden administration.

This is another way of saying, in thinly veiled sophisticate-speak: Get the damn Jews and Israelis and their allies the hell off our back while we responsible statesmen loyal to Biden (and Obama) get our nuclear deal with Iran back on track.

Cirincione is a fellow at the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft (a new, fiercely left-wing think tank funded by George Soros) and a former president of the Ploughshares Fund, which lavishly supported the original Iran deal campaign. He may be a bellwether of more hostile messaging to come.

In fact, after the administration leaked news of the “Israeli strike” on the IRGC ship in the Red Sea, Cirincione tweeted something to the effect that once again Israel is driving towards war. By implication, he was accusing Israel of dragging the United States into war, too.

Beware: Obama’s echo chamber is coming back in the service of Biden to bash Bibi and endorse another awful nuclear deal with Iran. (Israel Hayom Apr 11)

Is Recent Maritime Unrest Rocking the Regional Boat?

By Eyal Zisser

Much can be said about the shadow war between Israel and Iran that is taking place at sea, especially against the backdrop of the maritime border dispute between Israel and Lebanon. These issues seem to be taking center stage recently, as the security of the waterways has become turbulent.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the Arab world, led by Syria, sought to sabotage the National Water Carrier project to disrupt Israel’s water supply. The tensions over the issue were one of the triggers for the 1967 Six-Day War. Always imperative, water was essential for young Israel to ensure its existence and its then-agriculture-based economy. Now, Israel is a technological power that desalinates seawater and provides not only for its own water needs but also those of its neighbor, Jordan.

And so, what was once a struggle for water between Israel and its enemies is now a struggle on water.

That could soon change. Recently, the Lebanese people learned that Syria has licensed Russian exploration companies to search for this valuable resource off its shores—and off the Lebanese coastline as well.

While every little disagreement with Israel is seen by Beirut as a trigger for war, it dares not to stand up to Damascus. Syria, for its part, doesn’t think much of Lebanon, which is effectively ruled by Hezbollah that, much like Syria, answers to Iran.

Iran and Israel are also engaged in a struggle about waterways. It began with attacks against Iranian tankers violating an international embargo by delivering oil to Syria, thus feeding the regime’s war against its own people. Foreign media reports attributed these strikes to Israel.

Iran’s efforts to establish a maritime foothold on Syrian’s shores is equally disturbing, as this would allow it to deploy naval forces that would threaten Israel’s territorial waters.

The alleged Israeli attacks provoked Iranian retaliation against Israeli merchant ships, which in turn allegedly prompted an Israeli strike on an Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps vessel. And so, one incident leads to another, although both sides are careful not to cross any red lines in the way of actually sinking ships or harming the crews on board.

The ocean is thus becoming a major sphere of conflict, one key to Israel’s national security and economic prosperity. But it is also a battlefield like any other—another conflict sphere where Israel must spare no effort to stop Iran’s efforts to increase its regional foothold. (Israel Hayom Apr 11)

State Department Announces Intent to Break Law

By Mark Goldfeder

The US State Department announced this week that the Biden administration intends to distribute \$235 million in aid to the Palestinians, reportedly to “regain their ‘trust and goodwill’ after the Trump-era cuts.” The assistance package is set to take effect on April 10.

That decision is shameful, illegal and immoral, and Congress should not let it happen.

It is shameful to blame the Palestinians’ loss of aid on former president Trump. It was Congress, not Trump, who set the conditions for Palestinian aid. And it was the Palestinians, not Trump, who violated those terms with impunity. Hiding behind fake partisan politics to call what happened “Trump-era cuts” is nothing more than revisionist history.

It is illegal for the Biden administration to restore that aid because every year since 2014 the United States has made clear in annual appropriation legislation – adopted by a massive bipartisan majority each time – that if the Palestinian Authority were to initiate an International Criminal Court investigation, and/or so long as they were actively supporting such an investigation, the US would cut funding for the PA. This requirement was reaffirmed again very recently by a strong bipartisan majority in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021. Despite these clear and repeated warnings, the PA did initiate, and does continue to openly and officially support, just such an investigation. By law they must be held to account for the willful disrespect of and disregard of

American laws, values and interests. Anything else reflects the soft bigotry of low expectations.

Finally, restoring aid is immoral because the Biden administration knows exactly what the PA does with its international aid money. In a recent non-public report to Congress, the administration confirmed that the PA has continued to use that money to pay stipends through its official "Martyrs Fund" to murderous terrorists and their families. The PA spent at least \$151m. in 2019 on its "pay-to-slay" program and at least \$155m. in 2020. The fact that this program is codified in PA law – including that deadlier attacks get more money, thereby incentivizing bloodshed – is beyond sickening.

Congress was rightfully sickened, and in 2018 it passed an overwhelmingly bipartisan law called the Taylor Force Act, which prohibits the US government from resuming Palestinian aid until these payments to terrorists are stopped. Taylor Force was a US Military Academy graduate and veteran of both Afghanistan and Iraq. In 2016 he went on a school trip to Tel Aviv, and he was stabbed to death by a murderous terrorist.

The PA labeled his killer a "heroic martyr" and the murderer's family began to receive their regular payments alongside all the other glorified killers. It is a disgrace to Taylor Force's memory, and a grave disrespect to the memories of all those who have been killed, to try and curry favor with a governmental authority that would and actually does, certifiably and admittedly, pay to have us murdered.

The Biden administration will likely try to skirt the law by supplying the aid to civic groups instead of the PA directly, but that is not an answer for two reasons: First, the law prohibits any funding that directly benefits the PA, and there is no question that this is the intention. Second, according to a recent report from the US Government Accountability Office, between 2015 and 2019, the US Agency for International Development, which is the agency in charge of distributing this funding, did not ensure that the sub-awards from its allocations were not going to terrorists.

That is why more than a dozen organizations and more than two dozen members of Congress sent letters to President Biden and Secretary of State Blinken last week, urging them not to let the American people down by rewarding those who disrespect and devalue our very lives. It is not too late to change course, and Congress should make clear that the Palestinians need to regain our trust and goodwill before we send them support. At the very least, we must be absolutely sure that they will not use that very aid to glorify and pay the murderer of an innocent American soldier.

The writer is an international lawyer and the director of the National Jewish Advocacy Center. (Jerusalem Post Apr 11)

The Palestinian Democratic Boomerang

By Lt. Col. (Res) Maurice Hirsch

After 15 years of a de facto dictatorship, Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas announced in January that the P.A. will hold general elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council (the P.A. parliament) in May, followed by elections for P.A. chairman in July.

The U.S. administration and the European Union pushed Abbas to hold elections with the intention of promoting democracy and lending legitimacy to the Palestinian leadership. The result, however, will not be an endorsement of democracy, but will rather highlight the terrorist nature of the P.A.

According to lists published by the P.A. Central Elections Commission, among the parties set to participate in the upcoming elections, two are designated by both the United States and the European Union as terrorist organizations: Hamas and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).

The terror groups' electoral lists include convicted terrorists, some of them murderers and even mass murderers. In some instances, I was personally involved in their prosecution and/or incarceration.

These are some of the names that stand out on the Hamas list:

Jamal Abu al-Hija

Abu al-Hija was the head of Hamas's military wing in Jenin. He was directly involved in multiple terror attacks, including but not limited to a car bombing in Hadera in November 2000 in which two people were murdered and 64 injured, and the Miron Junction bombing in 2002, in which nine were murdered and dozens injured. Al-Hija is serving nine life sentences plus 20 years.

Nael Barghouti

Barghouti was convicted of murdering an Israeli army officer in January 1978 near Ramallah and sentenced to life in prison. He received a conditional release in the Shalit prisoner exchange deal in 2011. He was arrested again in 2014, in a move that I initiated, for violating the terms of his release and was again imprisoned to serve his original sentence.

Naed al-Fakhouri

Al-Fakhouri was convicted of recruiting suicide bombers and sentenced to 22 years in prison. He was released in the Shalit prisoner-exchange deal on the condition that he stay in the Gaza Strip.

Muhammad Abu Tir

Abu Tir has been a senior member of Hamas for many years. After his arrest in June 2006, I supervised his indictment on charges of membership and holding a senior position in Hamas. After his conviction, he was sentenced to four years in prison.

These are some of the names that stand out on the PFLP list:

Ahmad Sa'adat

Sa'adat was convicted of heading the PFLP in 2001 when PFLP members murdered Israeli Tourism Minister Rehavam Ze'evi. While not convicted for involvement in the murder, the PFLP has honored him publicly as the planner of the assassination. Arrested by Israel in March 2006, Sa'adat is serving a 30-year sentence.

Khalida Jarrar

Jarrar was arrested in April 2015. As part of a plea bargain I negotiated, Jarrar confessed in court to being a member of the PFLP and inciting to kidnap Israeli soldiers to secure the release from prison of Ahmad Sa'adat. She was sentenced to 15 months in prison, fined 10,000 shekels and given a suspended sentence. Most recently, Jarrar was indicted following the August 2019 terror attack carried out by PFLP terrorists in which 17-year-old Rina Schnerb was murdered and her father and brother severely wounded. Jarrar pled guilty to functioning as the de-facto head of the PFLP and is still in prison.

Ahed Abu Gholmeh

Abu Gholmeh was convicted of planning Ze'evi's murder and is serving a life sentence.

Walid Hanatsha

Hanatsha has a long history of PFLP-related terror. Most recently, he was arrested and indicted for his part in the terror attack in which 17-year-old Rina Schnerb was murdered. According to the indictment, Hanatsha not only approved the plan to carry out the attack but also drove the planner to the site on the morning of the attack itself. His trial is pending.

Prior to his arrest and indictment for murder, Hanatsha was the financial and administrative director of an E.U.-funded Palestinian NGO, the Health Work Committees.

Abdullatif Ghaith

Ghaith is a known member of the PFLP who held membership in the organization's "political bureau" until 2015 (at least). A special report of the Israeli government—"Terrorists in Suits, Blood Money—European-funded Palestinian NGOs & their terror operatives—A case study: Addameer" included Ghaith as a PFLP member.

While Hamas won the outright majority of votes in the last general elections, the Hamas government was later deposed by Abbas, who replaced it with a so-called "technocrat" government. Abbas later replaced the technocrat government with members from his own Fatah Party. In 2007, Hamas violently seized control of the Gaza Strip, on some occasions throwing members of Fatah to their deaths from the tops of buildings. Since then Abbas's Fatah has controlled the P.A. areas in Judea and Samaria, while Hamas controls the Gaza Strip.

P.A. law limits the term of the P.A. chairman to four years with the option, subject to election, of a second and final four-year term. Abbas is now in the 16th year of his first four-year term.

A truly democratic Palestinian society is a worthy goal. Elections that allow the participation of convicted terrorists, including mass murderers, are not a demonstration of democracy. Rather, they are an expression of the fundamentally warped, P.A.-created society in which terrorists are heroes and role models. Instead of endorsing, supporting and funding these elections, the European Union and the

United States should demand that Abbas exclude E.U.- and U.S.-designated terror groups from participating. Convicted terrorists running for the P.A. parliament is the Palestinian democratic boomerang everyone should have anticipated. (JNS Apr 13)

The writer is the director of Legal Strategies for Palestinian Media Watch. He served for 19 years in the IDF Military Advocate General Corps. In his last position, he served as director of the Military Prosecution in Judea and Samaria.

Will the State Department's New Anti-Semitism Monitor Give a Pass to Anti-Semites? By Jonathan S. Tobin

In recent weeks, an attempt to derail a consensus about the definition of anti-Semitism has received serious support from the Jewish left. The mainstream Jewish community, in addition to the United States and a number of other nations, has embraced the definition put forward by the International Holocaust Remembrance Association. But two new definitions have emerged to challenge that text. This controversy may also play a role in both the selection of a new head of the State Department's Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism and the future role of that office.

In one case, a group of scholars and activists backed an alternate definition cooked up by the Nexus Task Force, a group affiliated with the University of Southern California. Days later, a similar document, dubbed the Jerusalem Declaration by its authors, was published. In both, critics and foes of Israel joined together to craft a definition of Jew-hatred that took care to exempt those who oppose Israel's existence or compare it to the Nazis.

The goal of both groups was to shift the debate about anti-Semitism from one that recognizes that hatred and de-legitimization of Jews come from both the left and the right to a sole focus on extreme right-wingers.

The key to understanding this controversy is politics.

In the wake of the Jan. 6 U.S. Capitol riot, many on the left as well as leading Democrats and members of the media, have concentrated on sounding the alarm about the far-right. Anti-Semitic imagery among some of those in that mob reinforced the concerns that have understandably been heightened since the synagogue shootings in Pittsburgh and Poway.

At the same time, there is the recognition of an uptick in anti-Semitism—largely operating under the cloak of anti-Zionism—in American life and in some new circles. That's partly the result of the notoriety and favorable publicity given by the media to Reps. Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.) and Rashida Tlaib (D-Mich.), who are both supporters of the anti-Semitic BDS movement. The pair has also trafficked in anti-Semitic tropes.

Nor are they alone. Leading supporters of the Black Lives Matter movement, like Tamika Mallory, are vocal supporters of Nation of Islam hatemonger Louis Farrakhan and have engaged in discrimination and incitement against Jews. The 2019 epidemic of attacks on Orthodox Jews in the New York area by African-Americans can also be seen as, at least in part, evidence of the influence of both Farrakhan and some of the extremists associated with the BLM movement.

That means for any official tasked with the job of monitoring and advocating against anti-Semitism to be effective, they must shake off their partisan blinders and be ready to speak out against hate from both ends of the political spectrum.

But if one increasingly influential faction gets their way, that won't be the case in the next four years.

The State Department's office dealing with anti-Semitism only dates back only to legislation passed in 2004, and the first person to get the job wasn't sworn in until 2006. Like the other 4,000 political appointments that any new president can make, there are many people who want the job. But unlike the usual quiet lobbying that goes on behind the scenes for most such jobs, the competition for this post has gone public.

Several Jewish Democrats are openly vying for the position, and the battle over it has unsurprisingly become a proxy war between party factions.

A lot of mainstream traditionally pro-Israel Democrats want

President Joe Biden to name former Anti-Defamation League head Abe Foxman to the job. Given Foxman's long record of fighting anti-Semitism and strong support for Zionism, he's the most qualified choice. And given the fact that he dropped his nonpartisan stance in favor of open advocacy against former President Donald Trump, as well as endorsed the Democrats' disgraceful analogies between the most pro-Israel president to date with the Nazis during the 2020 election campaign, perhaps he's earned Biden's gratitude.

Another possible contender is historian Deborah Lipstadt, who is well-known for her groundbreaking work on Holocaust denial, and who also supported Biden and backed the bogus Nazi analogies about Trump.

Now it appears that there is also serious support for Nancy Kaufman, a veteran liberal Jewish community professional and the former CEO of the National Council of Jewish Women. As an article in *The Forward* made clear, Kaufman is the clear choice of "progressives." And given the increasing sway that the left has in the Biden administration, she may be the most likely choice.

The scramble for the position can be seen as merely a matter of patronage with the plum going to the candidate who can amass the most political IOUs from the people in power. In this case, however, there's more at stake here than the pedestrian question of which Jewish Democrat will get what is, in the context of the many other more powerful jobs up for grabs, a relatively minor post.

That's because while Kaufman is a very familiar face in the alphabet soup world of Jewish organizational life, she cannot be counted on to oppose left-wing anti-Semites.

As *The Forward* pointed out, though Kaufman claims to be a mainstream supporter of Israel, she only thinks of the IHRA definition as "an interesting tool" and opposes codifying it into law. That means that she opposes the passage of laws that outlaw discriminatory business practices rooted in BDS boycotts of Israelis and Israeli products. She also praised the so-called Jerusalem Declaration on anti-Semitism, whose purpose is to essentially give a permission slip to anti-Semites who masquerade as advocates for "human rights" but who seek to deny to Jews what no one would think of denying to anyone else: the right to live in peace and sovereignty in their homeland and the right to defend themselves.

Even more damning, in the course of pursuing anti-Trump and liberal political activity, she has made common cause with and even praised open anti-Semites like Mallory and Linda Sarsour when they worked at the Women's March, from which they were ultimately booted for their support for Farrakhan and discrimination against Jewish women.

Among Kaufman's supporters is the viciously anti-Zionist IfNotNow group, which seeks to sabotage Birthright Israel trips, although that organization is probably more interested in stopping Foxman than boosting Kaufman.

Just as telling is the support Kaufman has received from American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten. Just last week, Weingarten invoked anti-Semitic tropes and toxic critical race theory arguments to defend her union's outrageous stand against reopening public schools.

Yet the person who wants to be the leading voice against anti-Semitism abroad had nothing to say about Weingarten's outrageous and disgraceful statement. The same can be said about everyone else on the Jewish left, especially the Anti-Defamation League and its leader, Jonathan Greenblatt, who also refused to condemn a fellow liberal like Weingarten.

Seen in this light, it's clear that not only is Kaufman unfit for the job, she is also likely to use her post not to advocate, as her GOP predecessor Elan Carr did, against anti-Semites abroad, but could instead use her office's resources to play domestic politics by lending legitimacy to leftist Jew-haters like Omar, Tlaib, Mallory and Sarsour.

If Biden and Secretary of State Antony Blinken are serious about supporting the IHRA definition and fighting anti-Semitism, then they will risk offending progressives and turn Kaufman down. If not, the administration's effort to fight Jew-hatred may be over even before it starts. (JNS Apr 13)