



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*

Nothing but
Western liberal
cowardice explains it.

Canada in 2025 has joined the antisemites in spades. A report by Israel's Ministry for Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism in

Commentary...

How Extremism Continues with Little Intervention

By Shoshana Bryen

On Yom Hashoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, it is tempting to simply recount the ways "holocaust" and "genocide" have been bastardized to be used against Israel and Jews by people who proudly proclaim their intention to kill every last one of us—Iran, Hamas, Hezbollah and Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

While groups like the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) and politicians like Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) echo the false claims that Israel is committing genocide.

The same tropes are used against the United States as Donald Trump, with his policies being compared to Hitler and the Nazi regime. For instance, a disgusting political cartoon showed Jews being herded into cattle cars for their trip to the concentration camp above a drawing of what appear men—perhaps deportees from the United States—boarding an airplane for a trip back to their home countries. The comparison couldn't be missed.

Comedian Larry David penned a screed in The New York Times last week about fellow comedian Bill Maher's dinner with President Donald Trump called "My Dinner with Adolf."

And former Vice President Al Gore said recently, "I understand very well why it is wrong to compare Adolf Hitler's Third Reich to any other movement. It was uniquely evil, full stop. I get it. But there are important lessons from the history of that emergent evil." But Gore did it anyway.

You know there are more, but for the moment, let's stick with the current lesson of the Holocaust: how Western governments have allowed Jew-hatred, sometimes disguised as anti-Israelism and hatred of the West, to proliferate.

As I wrote in a piece last year about Kristallnacht, "Never again" is a pledge of Jewish defiance and Israel its embodiment. From the physical borders of the state and from Entebbe to Amsterdam, wherever Jews are threatened, Israel has taken on the role of defender of the Jewish people. If one is an optimist, "Never again" was also a way for the European community to verbalize that it understood the magnitude of its crimes in World War II. Repeating the mantra, Europe pledged it would never let it happen again, and its allies—primarily, the United States, Canada, Australia and others—were partners in that pledge.

The first is right, admirable and proper. The second is either untrue or a broken promise.

But liberal, democratic Western governments have become cowardly and are unwilling to defend the liberal, democratic principles they promote on paper. They talk the talk. King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands said "Never again" and apologized for the Amsterdam pogrom last year, but so what?

Every major city in Western Europe has seen hordes of radicals marching, calling for the destruction of Israel and often for the killing of Jews. In Australia, on the other side of the world, "Gas the Jews" was written on signs in Sydney.

In major American cities, Jews are attacked—sometimes as individuals identifiable as Jews by their clothing, sometimes when they gather in groups. Jewish communal buildings and some American universities are dangerous places for Jews as well. Jewish-owned or kosher food establishments have been vandalized in Los Angeles, New York, Chicago and Washington, D.C.

It isn't about Israel. It is about Jews and the wider Western construct, as made clear by pro-Hamas, anti-American graffiti in Washington.

October 2024 documented a 670% increase in antisemitic incidents in Canada in the year after the Hamas-led attacks in southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, as compared to the prior year. These incidents included "violent attacks such as shootings targeting Jewish institutions and arson attacks targeting schools, synagogues and other community institutions." Jews make up a little more than 1% of Canada's population but are victims of 70% of religious hate crimes.

The Trump administration has made it clear that radical, Islamist voices on college campuses will not have free rein with their visas. The colleges that support them, to the detriment of the civil rights of Jewish and pro-Israel students, will not have free rein with taxpayer money.

Harvard University is moaning about the cut in taxpayer funds while it sits on a \$52 billion endowment fund. More than \$1 billion was cut from Cornell and \$790 million from Northwestern universities amid civil-rights concerns. Federal funding to other universities like Brown, Columbia, Princeton and the University of Pennsylvania has also been cut. Student visas have been revoked, including for Mohsen Mahdawi and Mahmoud Khalil, among many others. Both claim to be nice guys. But both were prominent figures in Columbia's coalition of anti-Israel protesters, Columbia University Apartheid Divest (CUAD).

The U.S. State Department said that CUAD-led protests on campus included the harassment of Jewish students, an unauthorized protest encampment, building takeovers, clashes with police and property damage. CUAD has called for the "eradication of Western civilization," distributed Hamas material on campus, backed calls for "violence against 'Zionists'" and said that "violence is the only path."

According to the New York Post: "In two separate videos filmed at the Columbia campus, Mahdawi can be heard leading a crowd in a chant of 'From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free.'"

So, who is being castigated? Canada for descending into the swamp or the Trump administration for taking up the challenge of defending Jewish students and American values?

This is the lesson of Holocaust Remembrance Day 2025.

(JNS Apr 24)

The Leak Was the Whole Point By Seth Mandel

The revelation that President Trump "waved off" an Israeli-led strike on Iran's nuclear program is the second-most newsworthy part of the big New York Times scoop that broke yesterday. More significant is the fact that the article exists at all, and was published at this moment.

The primary purpose of the article is not as a record of internal deliberations but as an instrument of policy itself. Namely, to obstruct future U.S. and Israeli foreign policy by divulging enough details of Israel's plans in order to protect Iran's nuclear sites. The idea is to force Israeli planners back to the drawing board, thus delaying a possible future strike on Iran until Iranian air defenses have been rebuilt.

To understand why, it's crucial to have a clear picture of the two factions within Trump's national-security inner circle. There are the non-proliferationists, who prioritize stopping the spread of nuclear-weapons capability. The non-proliferationists' internal rivals are those who believe in 20th-century types of spheres of influence with the goal of divesting America of its obligations.

Divestors within the administration include Tulsi Gabbard, the pro-authoritarian former Democratic congresswoman who is now the

director of national intelligence; JD Vance, the vice president; and Susie Wiles, the president's chief of staff. Those naturally inclined toward non-proliferation include Mike Waltz, the national-security adviser; Pete Hegseth, the secretary of defense; and Gen. Michael Kurilla, the head of U.S. Central Command.

At the moment, the divestors have an advantage for entirely non-policy reasons. Hegseth showed disastrously poor judgment in what became known as Signalgate, in which the defense secretary uploaded U.S. battle plans to an unsecure chat that Walz had accidentally added a journalist to. Neither faced consequences for the lapse, but both have clearly been diminished by the public fallout. Meanwhile, Kurilla's tour of duty ends this year.

That latter point is one reason Israel reportedly ordered attack plans to be redrawn such that the mission could be launched before Kurilla's exit. Gabbard's isolationist leanings and Vance's incoherent FDR-style cynicism toward allies are now the dominant ideological strands in Trump's Cabinet, and the president nixed the strike plans.

Kurilla wasn't the only reason time is of the essence. Last year, Israeli retaliatory attacks on Iran reduced Tehran's air-defense systems to rubble. The non-proliferationists are open to the idea of taking advantage of this situation, which makes any U.S. involvement in strikes significantly less dangerous while (likely) permanently ending the nuclear threat from Iran, a Mideast client state of China and Russia.

The divestors don't want this outcome. They don't see Iranian nuclear proliferation as much of a threat, and they are comfortable with Iranian hegemony over our allies and over the region's shipping lanes. This was President Obama's approach as well—to empower Iran and weaken the Saudis and Israel so that a magical balance-of-power would emerge and keep the Middle East on its equilibrium, likely with a cascade of nuclear proliferation throughout the region. Although encouraging this nuclear cascade in the Middle East is an act of apocalyptic stupidity, presidents (and Congress) do like being given excuses to kick the can down the road.

And kicking the can is exactly what this is all about. Trump has been convinced to try his hand at negotiating with Ayatollah Khamenei, who will walk away from the table as soon as Iran's defenses are in better shape.

Along those lines, part of Israel's rushed plans to strike Iran—the ones intended to be launched while Kurilla was still around—included further demolishing Iranian defenses. If that isn't paired with bombing Iran's nuclear sites, it will at least buy the West some more time to do so by widening the window of opportunity.

That's where the New York Times article comes in. The detailed leaks are most likely the Gabbard faction's attempt to delay even that kind of attack by telling the Iranians what to expect. It's hard to see this as anything other than the director of national intelligence enabling U.S. and Israeli intelligence to be put in front of an enemy state.

The leak is the point. It's a tactical play to more or less help Iran torpedo American action. That's the intent, anyway. Whether it succeeds might depend on whether Walz and Hegseth find their voices and their spines. (Commentary Apr 17)

'Iran is Doing All it can to Rebuild its Air Defenses'

By Yaakov Lappin

Iran's public display of Russian-made S-300 components during its April 18 Army Day parade in Tehran has renewed debate over the state of its air defense network and its implications for Israeli Air Force (IAF) operational freedom.

While the S-300 remains one of Iran's most advanced long-range air defense systems, some observers stress that what was seen may be more psychological messaging than an actual restoration of Iran's degraded military capacity.

Dr. Uzi Rubin, a senior researcher at the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies and former founder and director of the Arrow missile defense project in Israel's Defense Ministry, examined the available footage and urged restraint in interpretation.

"I do not recommend making far-reaching speculations from the video clips of the parade. I couldn't find a full video of the parade – only repeated clips," Rubin said. "What I managed to see regarding the S-300 is, in total, two launchers, one logistics vehicle, and what looks like two flap lid radar vehicles in folded position. That suggests they have two S-300 batteries."

Rubin pointed to precedents of the Iranians showcasing domestic imitations of Russian technology. "It should be noted that in the past, they announced the development of a system similar to the S-300 and displayed both launchers and radars resembling the Russian system in parades," he said.

The logistics vehicles were disguised as commercial trucks, likely for road transport camouflage.

On the larger strategic question of whether Israeli air superiority over Iran remains intact, Rubin remained cautious, stating there was not enough public information to provide an answer.

Lt. Gen. (ret.) David Deptula, a former Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance at the United States Air Force headquarters who is Dean of the Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies and Senior Advisor at the Washington D.C.-based Jewish Institute for National Security of America, told JNS, "It is likely that several S-300 systems were eliminated by IAF F-35 attacks against Iran late last year."

"The display of the S-300 is not surprising, but certainly does not pose any new air defense threat capability," he said.

Deptula explained that Israel's successful targeting of Iranian air defenses on Oct. 26, 2024, has left Iran scrambling to recover. "It is highly probable that Iran is doing all it can to rebuild its air defenses in light of the damage imposed on them by the IAF. Russian and Chinese involvement in assisting Iran in this regard is a certainty."

Despite these developments, Deptula expressed confidence in Israel's current continued air superiority in Iranian airspace, arguing that Israel "absolutely" still retained this advantage.

During Israel's large-scale retaliatory operation against Iran following the firing of some 200 Iranian ballistic missiles at Israel on Oct. 1, 2024, the IAF reportedly used its stealth F-35I fleet and other jets to carry out coordinated strikes on Iranian air defense infrastructure, including radar arrays, command centers, and missile launchers. The attacks also targeted facilities linked to drone and missile production and a nuclear-related site at Parchin.

The April 18 parade was the first time since those strikes that Iran has publicly displayed the S-300, which it originally acquired from Russia in 2016. Tehran has previously boasted about domestic variants modeled after the S-300 platform, including the Bavar-373 system.

On the night of April 13 -14, 2024, Iran fired over 300 ballistic and cruise missiles and drones at Israel, and the vast majority were intercepted by Israel and its allies, particularly the United States.

In response to Iran's direct attack, Israel conducted a limited retaliatory strike inside Iran in the pre-dawn hours of April 19, 2024. Reports indicated the strike targeted an airbase near Isfahan in central Iran. Specifically, satellite imagery and official sources suggested the target was a radar component belonging to an S-300 air defense battery protecting the area, which includes sensitive nuclear facilities. (JNS Apr 24)

So-Called Israel-Hamas, Ukraine War 'Experts' Spew False Info on Joe Rogan's Podcast — There has to be a Standard

By Douglas Murray

Last week I seemed to break the internet.

I went back on the Joe Rogan podcast to talk about my new book, "On Democracies and Death Cults: Israel and the Future of Civilization," which is available at all good bookstores and on Audible, since you ask.

I've been on Joe's podcast a number of times before and have always enjoyed it.

Joe is a master of his art.

A lot of people think they can talk casually but interestingly for

hours.

But this time, I went on with a question.

Having not spoken to Joe since the wars in Ukraine and Israel started, I had become increasingly irked that the guests he has had on have been almost entirely anti-Ukraine and anti-Israel.

Many of the latter in particular are not just vindictively and maliciously anti-Israel but have been spewing claims that are demonstrably false.

Many are also people who are simply in no way expert at what they are talking about.

One of these is a comedian who goes by the name of Dave Smith.

Claiming some Jewish ancestry, he has spent the 18 months since Oct. 7, 2023, being very unfunny indeed.

Specifically, he has decided to spend his time going around the podcast world sounding off about Israel.

In the process, he largely cites people like him — people who have many views but no obvious expertise.

People like Darryl Cooper, who says he isn't a historian yet has been invited onto some of the world's biggest podcasts as "a historian."

One of Cooper's many ahistorical claims is that Winston Churchill was the chief villain of World War II.

On these and many other occasions, Cooper has simply lied about history.

When invited to debate the world's foremost living expert on Churchill last year, he declined, saying that he didn't know enough to go against such a figure.

Yet still Cooper gets invited on show after show to throw out falsehoods that he can't even back up.

And on which his online interviewers seem happy not to challenge him.

Another such figure from the world of comedy who is changing his shape to fit the time is Rogan guest Ian Carroll.

This is someone who, when he last went on Rogan's podcast, very carefully tried to minimize the evil of Adolf Hitler.

Outrageously and completely falsely, Carroll claimed that in the 1930s, Hitler had kept his antisemitism down.

A provably false claim that Rogan did nothing to counter.

All these men have also been palling around online with Holocaust deniers and proud antisemites like Jake Shields.

Two weeks ago, Rogan had his mate Dave Smith on yet again for a long podcast.

But for my return to the show, the deal was that I could come on only if Dave Smith was — once again — in the studio.

As if Joe didn't want to be unaccompanied.

Or that Joe thought it was I — of all his guests — who must be challenged.

I like a debate as much as the next Scotsman.

But what resulted was more than a debate.

It seems to have led to some kind of podcast-world meltdown.

The first reason was that from the outset, I challenged Joe on his choice of guests and why he had been giving a platform to only one side of a debate — and a very conspiratorial one at that.

He and Smith were immediately defensive.

But the real problem came when I raised the issue of expertise.

Because as I said then, and have said often, we have lived through a period when the "experts" have gotten an awful lot of things wrong.

From the COVID lab leak to the Hunter Biden laptop, we have lived through years after which distrust of experts has become inevitable.

Yet that doesn't mean that expertise does not exist.

It does not mean that a comedian can simply hold himself out as a Middle East expert and should be listened to as if he has any body of work.

It does not mean that someone who says they are not a historian but who practices false history should be cited as a historian.

This point seemed to rile both Smith and Rogan.

It appears to have riled their audiences even more.

Because many people seem to think that what I mean is that they

are not allowed to have an opinion.

That is wrong.

I think they are.

It's just that there should be a price to pay for spreading bulls—t.

And part of that price is that you should be called out.

If I had gone on Rogan's podcast and held myself out as an expert in MMA fighting, I suspect he would have noticed.

If I had kept making mistake after mistake and shown ignorance piled upon ignorance, I think he'd say, "Hey, you don't seem to be very knowledgeable about this."

And he'd be right.

So why is it hard to grasp that something similar applies in other areas?

In bigger rings and more important fights.

Having spent most of the last 18 months in Israel, Gaza, Lebanon and Ukraine, I don't think I know everything.

But I think I know a darn sight more than someone like comic Smith, who admitted he'd never even been to the region he spends all his time talking about.

"Oh, so you have to go to a country to comment on it, do you," said part of the internet.

Again the answer is obviously not.

But if it is your job, or you're making it your job, then probably yes.

If I filed columns for this paper pretending to be an expert on countries I'd never been to, I would expect my readers to complain.

As they should.

If I filed columns about a war zone from the safety of West Palm Beach, I think it would be fraud.

Journalism has had its own meltdown in recent years.

But it doesn't mean that we don't have standards.

Much though that might amaze some people.

What the standards are in the new media — especially on podcasts — is still being worked out.

But there must be some.

Otherwise the new media will lead people into errors and evils far greater than the old media could ever dream of. (NY Post Apr 17)

Rubio Torpedoes the Left's Anti-Israel Stronghold Inside the State Department By Jonathan S. Tobin

For decades, a group of so-called "human rights" organizations—in particular, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch—have been waging war on the State of Israel. As NGO Monitor, the authoritative source on the subject, has documented, these groups have conducted a multifaceted campaign involving support for boycotts across the board, smearing it as an "apartheid" state, and promoting its isolation and prosecution on the international stage.

In doing so, these non-governmental organizations and the liberal publications that continue to treat them as credible sources have succeeded in transforming human rights from a righteous cause into a movement that is a politically powerful, thinly veiled engine of 21st-century antisemitism.

Those who follow U.S. foreign policy have become all too aware of this development, especially since the Hamas-led Palestinian terrorist attacks and atrocities in southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023. Since then, this bogus "human rights" lobby has stepped up its efforts to delegitimize Israel's efforts to defend itself and acted as tacit advocates for Hamas in falsely depicting the war in Gaza and against other Iranian proxies in Lebanon and Yemen as acts of "genocide."

Most Americans have been largely unaware that a band of activists with similar goals and beliefs to those at Human Rights Watch and Amnesty have been operating from a base inside the U.S. government. Thanks to a reorganization of the U.S. State Department, announced this week by Secretary of State Marco, that may now be coming to an end.

This is much to the dismay of liberal outlets like The New York Times, in addition to former Obama and Biden administration staffers who are horrified about what they consider to be a "blow to U.S.

values.” According to the Times, the Trump administration is signaling that it “cares less about fundamental freedoms than it does about cutting deals with autocrats and tyrants.” In an article that largely consisted of quotes from foes of President Donald Trump and Rubio, the offices, such as the human-rights bureau, that are being pared down and stripped of their autonomy were described as “a sort of voice of conscience for policymakers as they balance America’s interests with its values.”

Phrased in that manner, this sounds like something terrible—a scheme that would truly undermine American advocacy for freedom abroad. But the giveaway as to what’s really at stake in this controversy came in the next sentence of the article. As the newspaper put it: “During the Biden administration, it offered internal criticism of Israel, arguing that it was not doing enough to protect civilians in Gaza.”

In other words, these bureaus have acted as a powerful check on the ability of any president to advance the U.S.-Israel relationship as well as to promote a malicious and false narrative that, like those spewing from Amnesty and Human Rights Watch, seeks to demonize Israel and any other targets of the political left. Though they are being portrayed in the liberal press as courageous truth-tellers working to spread freedom and democracy abroad, such officials have been acting in the grand tradition of State Department antisemites and Arabists who have sought to work against the interests of Israel and the Jewish people since the 1930s.

As Rubio explained in a government Substack post, for the past few decades, the State Department has operated several bureaus that, “provided a fertile environment for activists to redefine ‘human rights’ and ‘democracy,’ to conform to the ideology of the same so-called ‘progressives’ who have captured control of academia.

Often pursuing goals completely at odds with the foreign-policy objectives of the president and secretary of state, this growing band of biased bureaucratic ideologues has wielded considerable power and influence. To the frustration of those who understand the way that their agenda damages U.S. interests and allies, they’ve made a significant sector of the federal establishment into bastions of hostility to Israel and the governments of other nations that have been targets of the left, such as Hungary, Poland and Brazil. It also promoted policies that, as Rubio pointed out, “funneled millions of taxpayer dollars to international organizations and NGOs that facilitated mass migration around the world, including the invasion on our southern border.”

How could that be? And why has it taken so long for someone in authority to order changes like those that the current administration has put forward?

The answer to that question is fairly simple. Until now, no one in the White House or at the head of the State Department has tried to rein in what Rubio rightly termed “rogue” elements within the government.

They have operated with the impunity that comes with civil-service protections and the fact that past administrations either lacked the will or ability to restrain a powerful bureaucracy. As is true in governmental departments and agencies, the permanent employees lean hard to the left. They also have managed to fend off any efforts to control them by manipulating the political appointees, who are supposed to be their bosses, treating them as incompetent amateurs who know little about how the government works in much the same manner as the characters in the classic British political comedy “Yes, Minister.”

It’s also true that, at least in principle, both the Obama and Biden administrations had no problem with this “human rights” lobby inside the State Department because they largely agreed with them.

Yet the inherent problem of having a portion of the government conducting an ideological foreign policy largely independent of the people at the top of the organizational flow chart became exposed in the last 16 months of Biden’s term in office. That’s because the anti-Israel bureaucrats, like the pro-Hamas mobs on college campuses, believed that the administration of President Joe Biden was insufficiently hostile to Israel after Oct. 7.

As soon became apparent, the barbaric attack on Israeli civilians

and the war to eradicate Hamas that followed had fomented nothing less than a civil war within the administration. Large portions of the permanent foreign-policy bureaucracy, as well as many of Biden’s political appointees ensconced in positions below the rank of cabinet and undersecretary rank, simply opposed the ambivalent Biden stand on the war, in which he publicly opposed Hamas but at the same time didn’t want Israel to succeed in defeating it. They wanted a complete cutoff of U.S. aid and an American-imposed ceasefire that would enable Hamas to both survive the war they started and even to win it.

While some officials, including members of the State Department’s human-rights bureau, resigned in protest over Biden’s half-hearted support of Israel, most remained in place. They continued working to undermine that stand and help fund projects that would hurt Israel and aid Palestinians fighting it, including, as one Middle East Forum study noted, indirectly financing anti-Israel terrorism. Indeed, as the City Journal reported in February, USAID was directing American taxpayer dollars to Hamas.

That is the context with which Rubio’s reorganization should be understood.

One aspect of the scheme is that it will eliminate redundancies and reduce costs in keeping with the mandate of Trump’s Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), initially guided by billionaire Elon Musk.

Rubio, who, as the Times noted, was an ardent supporter of human rights and encouraged using American power to advocate for freedom abroad during his 14 years in the U.S. Senate. Contrary to the assertions of his critics, he has not changed his mind about the importance of the issue. Rather, he is attempting to rescue the cause of human rights and democracy from activists who have turned it into a crusade against Israel and other governments, such as that of Hungary, which is falsely labeled as authoritarian because of its resistance to left-wing attempts to undermine its national identity.

Rubio’s plan involves a massive shift that he hopes will end the radical power base inside the State Department by stripping it of its autonomy and putting it inside existing regional bureaus, where it won’t be free to undermine Trump’s pro-Israel policy or fund groups working to promote policies and ideas antithetical to U.S. interests.

Under Rubio’s plan, there will still be plenty of people at the State Department who will be tasked with monitoring human rights around the world and seeking to promote American values of liberty, including political and economic freedom. The administration will also preserve the office of the special envoy to monitor and combat antisemitism. Reportedly, it will shift to a global Jewish affairs coordinator rather than the old division under the office of the undersecretary of civilian security, human rights and democracy—a section of Foggy Bottom that was a major part of the problem Rubio is trying to solve. The Office of International Religious Freedom will also still be there.

Will Rubio succeed in taming and redirecting the energy of the diplomatic bureaucracy away from toxic left-wing activism and toward efforts that will promote American interests and strengthen U.S. ties with Israel and other allies? Only time will tell, but as Trump has demonstrated on other issues, such as his efforts to reform or defund academic institutions that tolerate and encourage antisemitism, enacting such fundamental changes requires bold strokes and decisive leadership.

For far too long, the administrative state, of which the left-wing elements in the State Department were a key part, ruled as an unelected and unaccountable fourth branch of the U.S. government that was dedicated to pursuing left-wing policies that no one had voted for. Trump and Rubio have rightly decided this has to end.

Their actions will provoke much consternation and pearl-clutching from the foreign-policy establishment and its liberal media cheerleaders. But their taking an axe to a portion of the State Department bureaucracy run by radicals is a victory for friends of Israel and American interests, and a clear defeat for their opponents who operate under the false flag of “human rights” advocacy.

(JNS Apr 24)