



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*

At least some Democrats now appear increasingly unnerved by the spectacles they're witnessing on America's college campuses. "Silence is complicity," read a rare statement of unequivocal condemnation of events at

Commentary...

Put Down the Protests By The Editors of the National Review

Things finally reached a breaking point on Columbia University's campus late last week. There, the implicitly antisemitic protests that have disrupted America's college campuses since the October 7 massacre evolved into something more explicit. At long last, Columbia's administrators had enough.

The pushback appeared to shock the demonstrators who resolved to "occupy" portions of the Ivy League campus they had overwhelmed. New York City police entered the premises last Thursday, rolling up a makeshift tent city consisting of conspicuously pristine camping gear and arresting 113 keffiyeh-clad students for trespassing.

Since the 10/7 massacre, Columbia's Jewish students have been forced to endure routine calls for their execution. It shouldn't have taken the slaughter, rape, and brutalization of Israeli Jews to expose chants like "Globalize the intifada" and "Death to the Zionist state" as calls for violence, but the university refused to intervene on behalf of its besieged students. When an Israeli student was beaten with a stick outside Columbia's library, it occasioned little soul-searching from faculty. Indeed, it served only as the impetus to establish an "Antisemitism Task Force," which subsequently expressed "serious concerns" about the university's commitment to enforcing its codes of conduct against antisemitic violators. But little was done. Indeed, as late as last month the school served as host to speakers who praised the 10/7 attacks and even "hijacking airplanes" as "important tactics that the Palestinian resistance have engaged in."

The school's lackadaisical approach created a permission structure to menace and harass Jewish students, and that's what happened. On Saturday, students and anti-Israel New Yorkers alike converged on Columbia's campus. There, they harangued and physically intimidated the Jewish student body.

"We were verbally harassed, and some of my friends were physically assaulted," one matriculated student told Jewish Insider. "They yelled at us to go back to Poland, that we have no culture, and chanted, 'Strike, strike Tel Aviv.'" Her experience is borne out by video footage of the protests that cascaded onto the internet. "Burn Tel Aviv to the ground," "Go Hamas, we love you, we support your rockets, too," demonstrators chanted in the faces of their terrified targets. In a now-infamous image, one demonstrator appeared before a group of counter-protesters holding Israeli and American flags with a sign pointing in their direction that read, "Al-Qasam's next targets."

It got so bad that Jewish students were advised to keep their distance from campus. "It deeply pains me to say that I would strongly recommend you return home as soon as possible and remain home until the reality in and around campus has dramatically improved," wrote Rabbi Elie Buechler, the director of the college's Jewish Learning Initiative. Columbia president Nemat "Minouche" Shafik informed students that their classes would be held remotely as college leaders gathered to discuss ways to end "this crisis."

Hamas demonstrators quickly reconstituted their encampment in Columbia's public spaces on Sunday, daring administrators and law enforcement to roust them again. They should take them up on the dare as soon as possible. New York City mayor Eric Adams has made it clear he's eager to act if Columbia requests the police again. Out of a perverse political calculation, the president's party — with the honorable exception of Senator John Fetterman — spent months mollicoddling the anti-Israel protest movement even as it devolved into a pro-terrorism movement.

Columbia from President Biden. "Even in recent days, we've seen harassment and calls for violence against Jews. This blatant Antisemitism is reprehensible and dangerous — and it has absolutely no place on college campuses or anywhere in our country." Gone were the rote denunciations of "Islamophobia" the White House convinced itself must accompany any acknowledgment of antisemitism.

Biden wasn't alone. "Thanks to pro-Hamas campus rioters & feckless administrators, threats to Jews only grow," Representative Debbie Wasserman Schultz declared. Other Democratic congressmen have also spoken out forcefully against the protests.

The problem extends well beyond Columbia, of course. Since 10/7, students have been intimidated and physically harassed by their colleagues at Harvard. They've been beaten at Tulane. They've been forced out of their kosher dining halls at Cornell. They've been besieged at Cooper Union — forced to hide in attics and spirited away from a braying mob through secret corridors. Just this weekend, former National Review intern Sahar Tartak was "stabbed in the eye with a Palestinian flag" on Yale's campus, according to the New York Post's reporting on her ordeal. "Tartak, who was shopping for an eyepatch when speaking with The Post, said she tried to report the assault to campus police, but they told her there was nothing they could do," the horrifying report read.

Now is the time finally to do something about this kind of harassment and associated acts of trespass and disorder. Yale did the right thing when police cleared out an encampment this morning. But Columbia remains a daily reminder of what happens when freaks and haters are allowed to impose their will on campus.

(National Review Apr 22)

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The Perils of a 'Revitalized' Palestinian Authority

By Danny Danon

The world is now contemplating the future governance of Gaza in the aftermath of the horrific Oct. 7 massacre and ensuing war. In particular, the international community has pushed for the installation of a "revitalized" Palestinian Authority as the government of Gaza, in addition to areas of Judea and Samaria.

The P.A.'s long history of violence and tacit endorsement and glorification of terrorism raises significant doubts about the feasibility of this proposal.

To date, neither P.A. chief Mahmoud Abbas nor any of his leadership team have condemned the Oct. 7 massacre. Worse still, captured Hamas terrorists who slaughtered innocent civilians on Oct. 7 are receiving stipends for life from the P.A. as compensation for their atrocities. Equally disturbing are the numerous polls that show a consistent majority of Palestinians support the massacre and Hamas.

None of this should be shocking. For decades, the P.A. has paid such stipends to terrorists as part of what is often called its "pay-for-slay" policy. For just as long, it has legitimized and incited terrorism through its educational system.

Both of these policies perpetuate bloodshed. They have caused shootings, stabbings, bombings, vehicular attacks, arson and the destruction of thousands of acres of land. Innocent Israeli civilians and their livelihoods have been targeted with impunity. Three recent terror attacks in Israel over just the past month were perpetrated by members of the P.A.'s own security forces.

The P.A.'s recent announcement of a new government, undertaken at the behest of the international community, might seem like a step towards stability. A closer look reveals disturbing truths.

Key figures in the proposed government explicitly support terrorism and espouse virulent antisemitism.

Muna Al-Khalili, the P.A.'s newly appointed minister of women's affairs, has openly praised deadly terror attacks, glorifying the perpetrators as heroes. Just three weeks after the Oct. 7 massacre, Al-Khalili emphasized "the right of the Palestinian people to resist."

Muhammad Mustafa Najam, the new minister of religious affairs, has referred to Jews as "monkeys and pigs" and endorsed anti-Jewish violence. Several other ministers also champion terrorist ideologies, deny the legitimacy of Israel as a sovereign state and question the humanity of Jews.

These appointments underscore the P.A. leadership's systemic antisemitism and discrimination against Jewish people and the Jewish state.

It is crucial for the international community to hold the P.A. accountable for its actions, particularly in the aftermath of Oct. 7. It should not pursue the failed path of rewarding terrorism. Genuine and substantive reform must be demanded as a prerequisite for any further engagement. Ending terrorism entirely and publicly acknowledging Israel as a legitimate neighbor are basic requirements for any meaningful and enduring peace.

Without addressing these fundamental conditions, peace efforts will remain futile, regardless of any superficial changes in rhetoric or policy.

The P.A. leadership, including the new "revitalized" government, has shown itself incapable of meeting these standards. It is time for the international community to acknowledge this reality. Gaza deserves better than leaders who glorify violence and perpetuate division.

At the very least, we owe it to the victims of terror past and present, and to our brave soldiers, to reject any government that condones or rewards terror. Our people's sacrifices must not be in vain. The road to peace is fraught with challenges, but it begins with a firm rejection of terrorism and a commitment to justice and accountability. (JNS Apr 21)

Biden Administration Caving to BDS Tactics Against Israel

By Israel Kasnett

Secretary of State Antony Blinken is reportedly considering blacklisting the IDF's Netzach Yehuda Battalion under the "Leahy Laws," two statutory provisions that, according to the State Department, prohibit the U.S. government "from using funds for assistance to units of foreign security forces where there is credible information implicating that unit in the commission of gross violations of human rights."

Extreme political NGOs and rights organizations often falsely accuse Israel of committing human rights abuses. In October 2022, DAWN (Democracy for the Arab World Now) submitted to the State Department a Leahy Law referral against the Netzach Yehuda Battalion for alleged "systematic and widespread abuses."

The battalion, an exclusively male, ultra-Orthodox battalion that, until late 2022 served in the Jordan Valley and Samaria and today operates in Gaza fighting Hamas terrorists, has faced accusations of abuse, most notably in the case of 78-year-old Palestinian-American Omar As'ad, who in 2022 died after being detained by the battalion.

But many critics see this hostile move as nothing short of prosterous, with the Biden administration hoping to win over anti-Israel voters ahead of the U.S. elections in November by delegitimizing the Jewish state as it fights a crucial war against a genocidal enemy.

Richard Goldberg, a senior adviser at the Washington-based Foundation for Defense of Democracies, specifically blamed U.S. President Joe Biden, telling JNS the president "appears to be ready to cross yet another Rubicon, this time in delegitimizing the military of a close democratic ally by fundamentally questioning its integrity, morality and adherence to the rule of law."

Goldberg added that the Biden administration is sourcing its information from "radical extremist organizations that work to destroy the State of Israel on a daily basis—some with ties to terrorist

organizations."

According to Goldberg, the ongoing political warfare against Israel "has emboldened Hamas, Hezbollah, and ultimately Iran.

"That Hamas refuses to release any more hostages and that Iran felt so confident in launching 120 ballistic missiles at Israel is a direct result of the Biden administration using BDS delegitimization tactics against a democratic ally," he said.

In an April 21 post on X, Goldberg called on U.S. senators to "elevate this [the Netzach Yehuda issue] to the President right now before the supplemental has passed the Senate, and get a firm commitment that such a morally bankrupt and irresponsible action will not occur. The House and Senate should ready legislative responses."

He also accused some employees of the State Department of harboring "virulent anti-Israel sentiment" and said there are "radical anti-Israel activists inside the Biden administration" who have a "long-awaited dream of imposing sanctions on the IDF or its units."

Goldberg called on committees of jurisdiction to "move expeditiously to demand Secretary Blinken turn over the list of organizations that submitted 'evidence' that's been used as the basis for a potential imposition of sanctions. ... All communications on this matter between both State and NSC [the National Security Council] and State and outside groups should be subpoenaed."

Jacob Olidort, director of research for the Gemunder Center for Defense and Strategy at the Jewish Institute for National Security of America (JINSA), told JNS the Biden administration's reported decision to rebuke Israel "by imposing sanctions on a unit of its military—as well as the manner and timing of how it was done—causes far-reaching damage, in this case not only to the institution of the IDF but to Israel's security."

Israelis "across the political spectrum are right to view this as a rebuke of the entire IDF, with a secondary message that Israel's military has no credible legal or judicial system to hold its own accountable," Olidort said.

He said he considered the move as "a concession by the administration to parts of its electoral base during an election year as well as an expression of its personal displeasure with certain members of the Knesset.

"This move could not have come at a more inappropriate time—during war, as Israel prepares for the Rafah operation in Gaza and braces for escalation on its northern border as well as from Iran directly—or in a more distasteful manner—announced publicly by the secretary of state rather than through the discrete channels of deliberations between U.S. and Israeli militaries—and sends an unmistakable message to our adversaries abroad and their supporters on U.S. college campuses that the United States restrains its support for Israel during its most precarious moment," Olidort said.

On Sunday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu denounced the Biden administration's intentions to sanction the Netzach Yehuda Battalion.

"I will strongly defend the IDF, our army and our fighters," he said. "If somebody thinks they can impose sanctions on a unit in the IDF—I will fight this with all my powers. As our soldiers are united in defending us on the battlefield, we are united in defending them in the diplomatic arena."

Defense Yoav Gallant spoke with Blinken on Sunday and the U.S. ambassador to Israel, Jack Lew, to discuss the issue of sanctions, according to an Israeli Government Press Office statement.

"The battalion's activities are carried out in accordance with the values of the IDF and in accordance with international law," Gallant said in the statement.

He admonished the U.S. and said, "Any attempt to criticize an entire unit casts a heavy shadow on the actions of the IDF, which operates to protect the citizens of Israel. Damage to one battalion affects the entire defense establishment—this is not the right path for partners and friends."

Gallant called on the U.S. to "withdraw its intention to impose sanctions," adding that Israel's "friends and our enemies are closely watching the ties between Israel and the United States, now more

than ever.”

Goldberg told JNS that using BDS tactics to delegitimize Israel and exercising the Leahy Laws “would start a slippery slope where the U.S. signals to the world that democracies are not capable of holding themselves accountable, giving the ICC [International Criminal Court] pretext to step in with arrest warrants for Israeli officials for made up war crimes, reopen investigations into the British military and eventually indict American officials for made-up war crimes, too.

“The president may think he’s just throwing another dart at Israel, but it’s actually a boomerang that will hit the U.S. military, too,” he said.

In his post on X, Goldberg wrote, “This is entirely a campaign to delegitimize the State of Israel—and to kneecap its efforts to defend its citizens from annihilation.” (JNS Apr 24)

The Obstacle to Peace is HHIJI+ By Charles A. Stone

Mutually assured catastrophe (MAC) was the status quo and deterrent that preserved relative non-belligerency between Hamas and Israel up to Oct. 6, 2023. On Oct. 7, Hamas decided that catastrophe was in its best interest. It ordered its terrorists to invade Israel and rape, pillage, burn and kidnap. The Hamas invasion assured mutual catastrophe.

Israel survives because its enemies are deterred, not because its enemies have moderated and are willing to accept a Jewish state. An Israel without effective deterrence would be at the mercy of Hezbollah, Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Iran—what I call HHIJI+.

Deterrence only works if it is credible. Clearly, Hamas and Iran have not been deterred. To restore deterrence Israel must neutralize Iran and its proxies. One out of some 300 Iranian missiles and drones recently fired at Israel hit. This means that 10 out of 3,000 are likely to hit; so will 100 out of 30,000. The math is not in Israel’s favor. It should be clear that, unless Iran’s nuclear weapons program is paralyzed, mutually assured catastrophe will morph into mutually assured destruction.

Many people still do not understand the MAC equation. On March 6, 1996, three years after the Oslo Declaration of Principles, New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman published the column “Who Are You?” At the time, Hamas was on a murderous rampage of terror attacks. Friedman wrote, “Hamas is a minority among Palestinians. But if this minority can manipulate the Palestinian Majority, then they are the majority.” This was prescient. Clearly, Hamas did become the majority.

Yet 28 years later, Friedman has now published a column titled, “Israel: Cease-Fire, Get Hostages, Leave Gaza, Rethink Everything.” In it, he suggests that it would be better for Israel to appease Hamas than to destroy Hamas in Rafah. Friedman views a weakened Hamas governing Gaza as the next best solution to Palestinian Authority rule. No doubt, allowing even a weakened Hamas to rule Gaza will eliminate any chance that Gaza will ever be governed by a moderate Palestinian Authority.

Bizarrely, Friedman insists that the Palestinian people are the ones who must and will condemn and overthrow Hamas and its leaders. This is par for the course. In 2006, during the Second Lebanon War, Friedman wrote, “On the morning after the morning after, Lebanese war refugees, who had real jobs and homes, will start streaming back by the hundreds of thousands, many of them Shiites. Tragically, they will find their homes or businesses badly damaged or obliterated. Yes, they will curse Israel. But they and other Arabs will also start asking Nasrallah publicly what many are already asking privately: ‘What was this war all about? What did we get from this and at what price?’”

Friedman predicted that the destruction Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah wrought on the Lebanese people would lead to his demise. This is the same Hassan Nasrallah who, 17 years later, still leads Hezbollah, the most well-armed non-state military in the world. Hezbollah’s arsenal of 150,000 missiles is being used to bombard Israel daily. Since Oct. 7, hundreds of thousands of Israelis have been evacuated from the north of Israel to escape Hezbollah aggression.

Friedman was undaunted by his prophetic shortcomings. On Dec.

1, 2023, he again unleashed his “the morning after the morning after” shtick, substituting Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar for Nasrallah.

“I have no illusions that the morning after a ceasefire commences and Sinwar comes out, some will wildly cheer him for the hurt he inflicted on Israel,” he wrote. “But the morning after the morning after, Sinwar will face brutal questioning from Gazans: Where’s my house, where’s my job, who gave you the right to expose my children to death and devastation?”

Why Friedman thinks that this prediction will prove any more accurate than his thoroughly inaccurate prediction regarding Nasrallah is a mystery.

The truth is that Hamas must be destroyed before Palestinians and Israelis can engage with one another over the geographic and political boundaries of a “Palestinian state” that does not threaten Israel’s security. Peace will take creativity and flexibility. Allowing Hamas to have any influence on the future of Gaza is not creativity or flexibility—it is insanity. (JNS Apr 25)

Is Biden Taking Lessons from ‘Lady’ AOC? By Ruthie Blum.

U.S. President Joe Biden began his Earth Day speech at Prince William Forest Park in Virginia on Monday by singling out a few prominent climate-change figures in attendance. Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, who introduced him, was one of them.

“You know, I learned a long time ago: Listen to that lady; listen to that lady,” he said. “We’re going to talk more about another part of the world, too, real quickly.”

It doesn’t take a genius to guess what region he had in mind. AOC—as the member of his party’s radical “Squad” is familiarly known—has been vocal in her demand that Biden suspend all aid to Israel over the “genocide” it’s committing in Gaza.

When the president said that he and she would be discussing this topic “real quickly,” he was hinting at a meeting that was to take place after the event. Indeed, when it was over, he, AOC and Sens. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Ed Markey (D-Mass.) flew together to the White House, where the four buddies who share an aversion to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu were seen entering the Oval Office.

Before they hopped on the Marine One helicopter and headed to D.C., Biden was stopped by reporters. “Do you condemn the antisemitic protests on college campuses?” one asked.

Echoing the question in his answer, he replied, “I condemn the antisemitic protests; that’s why I’ve set up a program to deal with that. I also condemn those who don’t understand what’s going on with the Palestinians and how they’re being ...”

It’s not unusual for Biden to trail off, mid-sentence. But in this case, he may have decided against completing his outrageous statement.

In the first place, it was an egregious expression of moral equivalence between Jews and the perpetrators of the worst atrocities against them since the Holocaust. Secondly, while the Jew-hatred being spewed across institutions of higher learning is undeniable—with demonstrators shouting at their pro-Israel counterparts, “Go back to Poland! Go back to Belarus!”—nobody in the world is showing a lack of sympathy for the Palestinians in Gaza.

Even the Israeli government regularly declares that the current war is against Hamas, not the residents of Gaza over whom the Iran-back terrorist organization rules. This is why so much care has been taken by the Israel Defense Forces to minimize civilian casualties and enable the flow of humanitarian aid into the Strip.

Nor do Jewish groups in America and elsewhere ignore the plight of the Palestinians. Ditto for people of all political stripes everywhere.

If anything, there’s not enough of an outcry surrounding the dire straits of the 133 remaining men, women and children held hostage by the same brutal rapists who gleefully slaughtered 1,200 innocents on Oct. 7 on the Jewish holiday of Simchat Torah. And there’s hardly ever a mention of Hamas rocket barrages—other than from those in

favor of killing Jews with them, that is.

The irony is inescapable.

As the debate continues in Israel and abroad about “regular” Gazans’ level of collusion with Hamas during and since the Oct. 7 massacre—with many saying that it’s hard to blame a fearful and brain-washed population—the mobs at Columbia University and other Ivy League schools aren’t concerned with such distinctions.

On the contrary, their message is all Palestinians are and should be loyal to Hamas. Take the following chant, for instance:

“Ya, Qassam [Hamas’s Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades], make us proud. Take another soldier out. We say, ‘Justice;’ you say, ‘How?’ Burn Tel Aviv to the ground. Ya, Hamas, we love you. We support your rockets, too. We support Hamas this time. It is right to rebel. Ya, Qassam, give them hell. Free, free Palestine. Free, free, free Palestine.”

Unlike those concerned about freeing Palestinians from Hamas for the benefit of the Middle East and beyond, the privileged protesters in Manhattan’s Morningside Heights are enamored of the terrorists. That’s not how AOC describes them, of course.

“It is especially important that we remember the power of young people shaping the country today of all days,” she stressed from her perch on the Earth Day ceremony podium, “as we once again witness the leadership of those peaceful student-led protests on campuses like Columbia, Yale, Berkeley and many others.”

Note to Biden: This Hamas apologist is the last “lady” you should be listening to on any topic, least of all one involving Israel and the Jews. (JNS Apr 24)

Blinken’s Willful Blindness By Ruthie Blum

Though it’s almost blasphemous to mention the Abraham Accords and the Oct. 7 massacre in the same sentence, the two have something important in common. Both exposed the lie that the “path to peace” must pass through Ramallah and Gaza City.

The first illustrated that previously hostile Arab and other Muslim-majority states—with modernization and self-preservation against the common threat of a nuclearized Iran in mind—were ripe for mutually beneficial ties with Israel.

The second proved, as if any additional evidence were required, that the road to hell—like that leading to the worst atrocities against Jews since the Holocaust—was never paved with good intentions; it has been tarred all along by Islamist ill will and evil Palestinian deeds.

To Israel’s peril and America’s detriment, the administration of U.S. President Joe Biden never internalized the former and has yet to acknowledge the latter. As soon as it took office, it began to undermine the historic agreements brokered by former President Donald Trump between Israel and the Gulf states.

At the Negev Summit in March 2022 in Sde Boker, where then-Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid hosted his Bahraini, Egyptian, Moroccan and Emirati counterparts, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced that “regional peace agreements are not a substitute for peace with the Palestinians.”

His resuscitation of this false premise was bad enough, especially as it coincided with an uptick in Palestinian terrorism in the streets of Israeli cities. But the fact that the overall context was Team Biden’s attempt to revive the nuclear deal with Iran from which Trump had withdrawn made it all the more significant.

This example of a disastrous foreign policy born of a disconnect from reality isn’t ancient history, by the way. The gathering in question took place a mere year and a half before Palestinian butchers broke through the Gaza border fence, raping, beheading, immolating and mutilating at least 1,200 Israelis (and foreigners), while abducting 250 others.

It should be noted here that though Hamas was the Iranian proxy whose honchos spearheaded the massacre, other terrorist groups gleefully participated in the mass sexual abuse and carnage. Palestinian Islamic Jihad was one. Fatah was another. You know, the so-called “moderate” faction headed by Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas.

Due to the extreme brutality against innocent men, women and children on that “Black Sabbath”/Simchat Torah holiday, Washington was shaken out of its reverie. So much so that Biden replaced the cold shoulder he’d been giving to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu with a warm embrace, at least initially.

Subsequently, what has followed since the start of “Operation Swords of Iron”—Israel’s justified war to destroy Hamas—is schizophrenic behavior on the part of Washington towards Jerusalem. Some may attribute Biden’s about-faces—rhetorical and military backing on one hand, and warnings and threats on the other—to his memory lapses.

The same can’t be said about Blinken, however. No, his conflicting messages, like his ideology, are deliberate.

Indeed, despite everything that’s emerged in the past six months—including proof that Tehran is the head of the octopus preventing stability in the Middle East; that the Abraham Accords helped form the coalition that intercepted Iran’s April 14 barrage at Israel; and that the Palestinians seek Israel’s annihilation, not a peaceful “two-state solution”—his worldview hasn’t shifted.

His mind frame enables equating the Jewish state with its foes and buying Palestinian propaganda about civilian casualties and “famine” in the Strip.

“Even as we’ve been dealing with the conflict in the Middle East and ... the unprecedented attack by Iran on Israel, we’ve remained intensely focused on Gaza,” Blinken said in a press briefing at the close of the G7 meeting in Capri on Friday. “We urge the rapid implementation of Israel’s humanitarian assistance commitments—more aid, more crossings, better deconfliction, better distribution of the assistance to all who need it.”

He went on: “We also focused on the imperative of getting to a ceasefire with the release of hostages. Such a ceasefire would facilitate the dramatic expansion of the humanitarian assistance. It would also let [those] Gazans ... who have been displaced from the north [return there].”

He then said, laughably, that Hamas “seems more interested in a regional conflict than it is in a ceasefire that would immediately improve the lives of the Palestinian people.”

Really?

Yes, he added, Hamas “continues to move the goalposts, and the world needs to know and ... understand ... that the only thing standing between a ceasefire and the Gazan people is Hamas.”

Still, admitting that Israel isn’t the obstacle didn’t stop Blinken from reiterating his and Biden’s staunch opposition to an operation in Rafah, site of the last-standing Hamas battalions and likely location of many of the 133 hostages. This isn’t surprising, given what he told reporters during the question period.

“Let me ... repeat what our focus has been and what it remains: de-escalation, avoiding conflict ... and calling on all concerned to exercise restraint,” he said. “That’s what we’ve been doing over the last couple of weeks, and as necessary that’s what we’ll continue to do.”

Asked about the United States’ blocking on Thursday of a U.N. Security Council resolution to grant “Palestine” full membership as a state in the international body, Blinken reassured that American commitment to achieving a Palestinian state hasn’t wavered.

“We believe that is vital to having long-term, sustainable, durable peace and security. And, of course, it’s the only way to fulfill the ... rightful aspirations of the Palestinian people,” he stressed. “But getting to that, achieving that state, has to be done through diplomacy, not through imposition.”

News flash to America’s top diplomat: No “long-term, sustainable, durable peace and security” is possible without the “imposition” of power, hard and soft, on all those bent on the demise of the United States and elimination of Israel.

Appeasement of the ayatollahs nearly unraveled the Abraham Accords, which the Palestinians were welcome to join, but refused. Failure to see the Palestinian body politic for what it is has served only to breathe new life into its decades-old death cult. (JNS Apr 21)
