



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

on the use of force”
through the Lebanese
Armed Forces.

When Israel withdrew from Lebanon in 2000, Hezbollah had lost any legitimate reason to exist. Instead, it tightened its grip on the country. Former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik

Hariri was assassinated in 2005 in a bombing widely attributed to Hezbollah, which then amassed an arsenal of some 150,000 missiles and ultimately dragged Lebanon into another devastating war in 2026.

Watching Lebanese Ambassador Nada Hamadeh Mouawad sign the agreement on Friday was deeply moving.

The elimination of Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah Secretary-General Naim Qassem’s increasingly desperate calls to reject the agreement, and the weakening of Iran’s regime created the conditions that enabled U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio to broker this unexpected diplomatic breakthrough.

The result is more than a ceasefire. It represents a renewed moral campaign against terrorism and in favor of genuine peace.

Israel and Lebanon now deserve the full support of the free world. (JNS Jun 28)

Commentary...

A Positive Trilateral Agreement that Resets the Battle Against Terror By Fiamma Nirenstein

Israel and Lebanon have signed agreements, armistices, ceasefires and security understandings before—in 1949, 1983, 1996, 2024—and now in 2026.

It is, therefore, understandable that skeptics of the current trilateral agreement argue that it will simply pave the way for yet another Lebanese civil war while tensions in the Gulf continue to rise, potentially leading to a confrontation between Iran and the United States.

Yet there is another way to view this moment—through the broader history of relations between East and West and the role of the United States. That perspective offers reason for hope.

At a critical moment, when Iran appeared to be gaining the upper hand across the region, it instead suffered a strategic defeat.

For years, Tehran treated sovereign Lebanon as one of its strategic assets, seeking to impose a permanent confrontation with Israel while allowing Hezbollah to dominate the country, remain heavily armed along Israel’s border and prepare its own version of another Oct. 7 massacre.

That vision has now been challenged.

The new U.S.-brokered agreement was negotiated by the two countries with the greatest stake in its success—Lebanon and Israel, neighboring states that have both suffered from Hezbollah’s aggression.

On Lebanon’s MTV television network, political talk show host Walid Abboud addressed Hezbollah directly: “You have to leave. Stop ruining our lives.”

His words reflect a growing sentiment. Lebanon still dreams of making Beirut the Paris of the Middle East—not a satellite of Tehran. Hezbollah demonstrations this week were met with a firm response from Lebanon’s own security forces.

In Israel, meanwhile, there is once again cautious hope for peace with its northern neighbor and for the end of Iran’s regional dominance.

The road ahead will be difficult, but it symbolizes something larger: The possibility that even in difficult times, the divide between Judeo-Christian civilization and the Muslim world can be overcome by confronting the common enemy—terrorism.

For a time, Iran appeared to hold the fate of the Middle East in its hands, insisting during its understandings with Washington that Israel immediately withdraw from Southern Lebanon.

Despite pressure from U.S. Vice President JD Vance, Israel maintained that it would not leave while Hezbollah remained entrenched on the border with its missiles, drones and underground tunnel network.

Now Lebanon appears to recognize what much of the international community has failed to understand—that Israel has no territorial ambitions in Lebanon and that cooperation with the Jewish state could become the path toward freeing the country from Hezbollah’s grip.

A similar process may be unfolding in Gaza, where growing public protests suggest that some Palestinians are beginning to recognize that Israel’s presence may ultimately help free them from their greatest enemy: Hamas’s dictatorship.

Under the agreement, Israel has committed to withdraw once Hezbollah is fully disarmed. Both Israel and Lebanon affirm “the right of each state to live in peace” and express their shared desire “to live in security as sovereign states.”

Two designated areas will serve as the first test of Lebanon’s effort to restore what the agreement describes as “the state’s monopoly

Alarm Bells Go Off in New York By Melanie Phillips

Extreme socialism is now on the march in America, with the demonization of Israel as the principal weapon in its arsenal.

Claire Valdez, Brad Lander and Darializa Avila Chevalier, three extremists backed by New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani, emerged victorious this week from their Democratic primaries in New York City’s 7th, 10th and 17th congressional districts.

Valdez and Chevalier are affiliated with the ultra-left, anti-American Democratic Socialists of America.

On social media, Valdez has boasted of having “wiped my hand on the American flag.”

Chevalier, a convert to Islam, has called for the abolition of police, prisons and the country’s borders. She also co-founded Columbia University Apartheid Divest, a Muslim Brotherhood front group whose goals are the “full eradication of Western civilization” and the cultivation of “unrest and violence in America.”

If elections to New York’s legislature are included, seven out of eight DSA-affiliated candidates won victory this week.

The support of Mamdani, who actively campaigned for these candidates, was critical to this alarming advance for extremism.

Yet the commentator and “Morning Joe” host Joe Scarborough declared that the person most responsible for this march of extremism in New York City wasn’t Mamdani, but the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

What was shaping views now, he said, were images that Israel had brutalized children and women in Gaza “with bombing that looks indiscriminate on TV day in and day out for years” and would be “able to level half of Lebanon.”

Scarborough did not draw the reasonable conclusion that these images had persuaded millions of people to believe libelous falsehoods that had been propagated to delegitimize the State of Israel as a prelude to its destruction.

Instead, he suggested that these lies were true, and so he was holding Netanyahu responsible for the anti-Zionism which had powered those election campaigns.

A moment’s thought shows how ludicrous this is. Hatred of the Jewish homeland not only long predated Netanyahu’s first period as prime minister but predated the establishment of the State of Israel itself.

It’s true, however, that anti-Zionism was a driving force in these elections. All three House candidates ran campaigns that focused on ending U.S. support for Israel.

All three of them used the “genocide” libel against the Jewish state. Chevalier doubled down on the support she had voiced for

Hamas the day after the terrorist group led the attack against Israel on Oct. 7, 2023.

A hijab-wearing Palestinian Arab, Aber Kawas, who won the primary for the New York State Senate, has written extensively on her blog about her support for “imprisoned heroes,” including the “Holy Land Five” (convicted of terrorism financing) and Ahmed Ferhani, an Algerian man who pleaded guilty in 2012 to planning a mass shooting at a Manhattan synagogue.

For his part, Mamdani referred last week to the pro-Israel lobby group AIPAC and its supporters as “monsters,” channeling the key antisemitic conspiracy theory that accuses the Jews of controlling America in the pursuit of diabolical goals.

The true monsters are surely the Iranian regime, Hamas, Hezbollah—and Mamdani himself, who works for Israel’s destruction and hugely increases the physical danger to Jews living in and visiting New York.

These New York election results have demonstrated that anti-Zionism has become the principal driver of Democratic Party politics, just as it has of progressive culture in general.

The elections demonstrated the menacing alliance between Islamism and ultra-leftism—embodied by Mamdani—that has the whole of America in its sights.

Islamists and leftists are united in the two things that drive them: their desire to end America and the West, and their deranged loathing of Israel and the Jewish people.

This loathing isn’t just the glue binding these two otherwise opposing groups together. It’s the Islamists’ key weapon against America itself.

The “Jewish question” is now turning into the driver of Democratic Party politics. Hatred of Israel is a Trojan horse for the agenda of Islamisation, the process of conquering America and the West for Islam.

Tragically, however, many American Jews whose support for the Democrats is tribal and unshakeable continue to back Mamdani even now.

Brad Lander, a former New York City comptroller who is Jewish and who defeated Rep. Dan Goldman (D-N.Y.) in the primary for New York’s 10th Congressional District, is a close ally of the mayor. He declared that he would be “one of the Jewish members of Congress most willing to stand up for Palestinian human rights,” and that he would “stand firmly against bigotry aimed at Jews.”

This was humbug.

Last month, Lander went to the Al-Khooi Foundation, an Islamic center in Queens, N.Y., identified by American security agencies as allied to the Iranian regime.

There, he accused Israel of a “desecration” of Judaism by committing genocide in Gaza and potentially also in Lebanon. He said he hoped to partner with Reps. Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.) and Rashida Tlaib (D-Mich.)—two members of the Israel-hating “Squad” in the U.S. House of Representatives—just as he had with Mamdani.

He even recited in Arabic a verse from the Quran that said: “He is Allah who is one, Allah the eternal refuge ... nor is there to him any equivalent.” Following his remarks, the Imam at the mosque prayed to the Mahdi—the Shia Muslim messiah—to kill infidels with his sword.

The anti-Israel group IfNotNow celebrated Lander’s win as “a blueprint for the future for both the Jewish community and the Democratic Party.”

“He ran a bold, unapologetically Jewish campaign that rejected pro-war lobbies like AIPAC and the endless flow of U.S. weapons to Israel,” stated the group’s executive director, Morriah Kaplan.

But Lander is actively running interference for Islamists determined to kill Jews, exterminate Israel and conquer the West.

Defaming and delegitimizing Israel and Zionism is not only deeply unjust. It’s a direct onslaught on Judaism and leads inexorably to attacks on Jews.

After Lander’s opponent, Goldman, visited a coffee shop in Brooklyn, N.Y., with his 7-year-old daughter, the cafe subsequently posted the message: “We don’t serve racists fascists homophobes genocide enablers or anyone in between. Too bad we didn’t recognize you right away, or we would have turned you away.”

A journalist on Fox & Friends had reported that people in line for a food bank in New York City had been talking to her, too, about AIPAC. As a studio presenter said, “They believe that the United States is taking the money that could go to them and is donating it to Israel.”

Many wonder why the interests of so many Americans have become identified with events taking place thousands of miles away. Back in 2023, a Harvard-Harris poll found that two-thirds of Americans between the ages of 18 and 24 agreed that “Jews as a class are oppressors and should be treated as oppressors.”

Most New York voters, who may assume that all the libels they are fed about Israel are true, nevertheless almost certainly don’t put Israel at the top of their concerns above the cost of living.

But Israel now stands proxy for something else: a nation state that’s supposedly grinding the faces of the poor and disadvantaged. So a vote for those who hate “oppressor” Israel is a vote for the “oppressed” everywhere.

Tragically, many liberal American Jews sign up to this warped, perverse and hateful mindset because this is now the dominant thinking in the Democratic Party.

Anti-Zionism, which shockingly has now framed the demonization of Israel as conscience itself, has driven liberals off their moral compass. As a result, they are pawns in a far bigger game being played: to conquer America and the West for Islam.

The Democrats are turning into an extremist party posing an increasingly acute danger to America. And Jews who still support it are debauching Judaism, betraying the Jewish people and aiding the mortal enemies of the West. (JNS Jun 25)

Who will Win the Trump Foreign-Policy ‘Apprentice’ Contest?

By Jonathan S. Tobin

If, like me, reality shows don’t interest you, then President Donald Trump’s hit television show “The Apprentice” and its “Celebrity” spinoff came and went without notice. But it looks like we’re being given another chance to watch something very much like the series, which ran from 2004 to 2017, and whose popularity helped boost Trump’s presidential ambitions.

U.S. Vice President JD Vance, 41, and U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, 55, appear to be pitted against each other while pursuing competing approaches to solving the administration’s Middle East dilemma. Their efforts have taken on the appearance of the shows, where contestants competed against each other for Trump’s favor.

But the stakes involved in the foreign-policy version of “The Apprentice” are a lot higher than the \$250,000 per annum job in the Trump organization that went to the winners of the TV show. They involve not only the prospects for war and peace in the Middle East, but are also inextricably tied up with the chances for either man to succeed Trump as the Republican presidential nominee in 2028.

Enough people found “The Apprentice” entertaining to make it a hit show. And there may be something to be said for a managerial style in business that forces subordinates to be on their toes and always pushing for an advantage. On the other hand, it can also be argued with equal, if not greater, validity that cultivating such a cutthroat culture in any enterprise is likely to do far more harm than good.

But when it comes to the question of putting an end to the nuclear threat from Iran, as well as its ballistic-missile program and its continued status as the world’s leading state sponsor of terrorism, it remains to be seen whether the Vance-Rubio competition will do more harm than good to the world, the United States or either man’s career.

The contradictions between the competing worldviews and strategies that Vance and Rubio are attempting to implement are obvious. Depending on your point of view, this is either the latest illustration of Trump’s strategic genius or proof that while his approach can work wonders sometimes, at other moments, they are evidence that a lack of presidential principle is a formula for defeat.

Alongside Israel, Trump launched a war against Iran on Feb. 28. At the beginning of that campaign and for several months

beforehand, Rubio, who also serves as national security advisor, seemed to be Trump's right-hand man. He led the way during the administration's actions against Venezuela and other initiatives. But despite great military success being achieved by the allies against the Islamist regime, it neither fell nor surrendered. And by menacing shipping in the Strait of Hormuz, it created a global economic problem for a president who lacks a clear strategic vision or the patience for a drawn-out conflict.

This left Trump stuck with an unpopular war that made gas prices spike and started doing him real political damage. Rather than sticking with the campaign to grind the Iranians down via a combination of military and economic pressure, he seems to have bailed on the war, agreeing to a ceasefire and then negotiations that have allowed Iran to regain the initiative and credibly claim to have defeated the Americans. At this point, Rubio seemed to be shunted aside and replaced to some extent by Vance, who had made no secret of his opposition to the decision to go to war.

In fact, Vance, who had been sidelined during the war, was then thrust into the position of leading the negotiations to extricate the United States from the conflict. In doing so, he started sounding and acting more like a representative of former President Barack Obama than of Trump, while seeking to ingratiate himself with the Iranians as he trashed America's Israeli ally.

Yet the vice president quickly found himself being faced with the same delaying tactics, disingenuous statements and provocations that the Iranians had used against Obama and former President Joe Biden's envoys. He's tried to make nice and grant them concessions on a variety of points, including their continued possession of nuclear material, while leaving missile production and terrorism out of the talks. Even worse, with Trump's support, Vance has agreed to link Israel's efforts to prevent Iran's Hezbollah allies from making northern Israel unlivable to the nuclear bargaining—in effect, legitimizing Hezbollah and Iran's use of them to hold Lebanon hostage.

Despite all that, Vance and his fellow negotiators—special envoy to the Middle East Steve Witkoff, and presidential son-in-law and adviser Jared Kushner—have struck out in their efforts to turn the current ceasefire into something they can label as a “peace” agreement with a regime that has no interest in anything of the kind.

Rubio was not left waiting off-stage waiting to see what happened next. He was responsible for another competing negotiating track involving the conflict between Israel (which has been completely cut out of the talks with Tehran) and Iran's Hezbollah auxiliaries in Lebanon. While Vance, Witkoff and Kushner got nowhere, Rubio actually managed to get the government of Lebanon to sign an agreement with Israel. It creates a framework for a process to restore Lebanese sovereignty, disarm Hezbollah, and thereby, work to achieve peace between Israel and its neighbor to the north.

Thanks to the intransigence of Hezbollah and its Iranian masters, as well as the weakness of the Beirut government, it's more than likely that none of that may ever happen. Still, in contrast to what Vance has been trying to do with Iran, it conceded nothing to the enemies of both America and Israel, and was carried out from a position of strength as opposed to one of desperation. That sends Iran a powerful and much-needed message that it should not think it can get whatever it wants from the Americans.

Vance's foreign-policy positions have shifted, as is the case with many of his stands on a variety of issues, during the course of his young political career. He used to be a more conventional conservative but has gradually become something of a neo-isolationist who disdains most of America's foreign-policy commitments other than an interest in fending off the geo-strategic challenge from China.

He touted Israel as the perfect MAGA ally in 2024 because it provided the United States with tangible assets and fought for itself. Now, however, he speaks of the Jewish state in much the same way as traditional U.S. State Department Arabists and right-wing antisemites have done: as an unruly and widely despised vassal state that compromises American interests and needs to do as it is told. Indeed, his recent verbal abuse of Jerusalem sounds like something that could just as easily come out of the mouth of one of his friends—former Fox News host and current antisemitic podcaster Tucker Carlson—or anti-Israel Democrats.

His approach to the current situation seems based on the notion that what began as a joint U.S.-Israeli war on Iran to prevent it from obtaining a nuclear weapon, as well as to halt its missile production and export of terrorism, was a bad idea. And he seems to regard the Jewish state's efforts to prevent Tehran's Hezbollah auxiliaries in Lebanon from continuing to make northern Israel unlivable as an unnecessary complication to his efforts to get a deal with the Iranians at virtually any cost.

That's a reality that many Trump supporters find hard to accept. They prefer to believe that his acceptance of a Memorandum of Understanding with Iran, coupled with handing off diplomacy with Tehran from Rubio to Vance, is a clever misdirection play that would eventually turn what appeared to be an abject defeat into a victory. Their optimism has been buoyed by both the exchange of attacks between the United States and Iran in recent days, as well as Rubio's brokering of an agreement between Israel and Lebanon, as proof that they were right.

But Trump's detractors, including some who up until now regarded him as a reliable friend of Israel and a man who understood that Iran could not be relied upon to stand by any agreement, look at the same evidence and see something else.

The Iranians' willingness to provoke Washington seems like a test of whether Trump is serious about restarting the war if the Islamist regime fails to negotiate seriously. Though the United States recently struck back over Iran's firing on ships in the Persian Gulf, the limited nature of those strikes probably told leaders in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, who seem to be in charge in Tehran these days, that they need not fear a resumed war and that they have Trump's measure, much as they did with Obama and Biden.

While Rubio has been derided by far-right critics as a “globalist,” the accusation is untrue. He is the genuine realist of the two Trump deputies since he labors under no delusions about Iran's interest in, as Obama once said, “getting right with the world.” He also knows that the United States cannot safely abandon its allies in the Middle East without compromising its own interests or endangering its ability to confront China in the Pacific.

And so, which man will come out ahead in the competition to do Trump's bidding—or to accomplish something that the president can live with, let alone help him boost his popularity ratings?

Vance's determination to carry out a Republican version of Obama's appeasement policy toward Iran could, if he is willing to keep giving in on every issue, potentially end the conflict for now and lower gas prices in the United States. That might make him the “Apprentice” winner, at least in the short term.

The problem with that path is that, as unpopular as the war might be, a demonstration of weakness that produces an Iranian defeat of the administration would be even worse for the president. It will tarnish his brand as the unpredictable but powerful world leader. After already investing so much political capital in the war, exchanging lower fuel prices for an Iranian victory won't undo the damage done to the administration's favorability ratings. Nor will it make the GOP more likely to win the midterms.

Moreover, if Trump realizes that the secretary of state's stronger stand and a return to the effort to defeat Iran gives him the only pathway to a policy that won't guarantee a defeat at the hands of a country he has long detested, that could make Rubio the winner of the competition.

Vance's flip-flop on Israel seems to be not so much rooted in belief in Iran as a credible negotiating partner or even disdain for involvement in wars in the Middle East. Rather, it could be a function of his reading of the current political climate in which demonization of Israel has been mainstreamed.

Though the majority of Republicans are still pro-Israel, a portion of the right, especially among younger voters, has been immersed in the same toxic ideas about race and Jews that have transformed the Democrats into a party that tolerates antisemitism. They've also been exposed to the drumbeat of anti-Israel and antisemitic incitement coming from podcasters like Carlson, far-right political commentator Candace Owens, neo-Nazi Holocaust denier Nick Fuentes and their celebrity enablers like Megyn Kelly.

Vance may have come to the conclusion that the path to victory

in 2028 is one based on turning the GOP away from Israel. If Trump, ever the transactional actor and keenly sensitive to the polls, thinks he's right about that, then he could discard his position as the most pro-Israel president since the founding of the modern Jewish state. That might lead, among other things, to him backing Vance as his successor and shelving Rubio and his pro-Israel policies.

It's a nightmare scenario that should scare friends of Israel and those Republicans who believe that adopting left-wing positions—on Iran or anything else—is both a calamity and political poison.

It's also a prospect that many of Trump's Jewish supporters utterly reject. They prefer to believe that the entire contest is an example of him trolling his opponents at home and abroad. From this point of view, the president is playing three-dimensional chess and setting up Vance to fail. They are counting on him to dump the appeasement track as soon as it makes political sense for him to do so.

In their favor is the likelihood that, regardless of the White House's current intentions, Iranian intransigence will soon force Trump to discard Vance's placating that country's mullahs and military. That would mean that either in the coming weeks and months or after the midterms, Trump will resume the effort to force Tehran's surrender or the fall of the terrorist regime. His faithful adherents base that hope on Trump's pro-Israel record, as well as his detestation of bad bargains like the one his vice president has sought in vain to achieve.

Moreover, sticking with the position that led him to join the war isn't just sound policy. Standing back and counting on the Democrats' hopes for a return to power being sunk by their willingness to embrace antisemitic socialist extremists seems like the more sensible course of action.

If so, Rubio might eventually emerge as the victor in this bizarre contest with Vance. If not, the results of this new version of "The Apprentice" won't just be disastrous for the secretary of state. It will be a blow to the effort to preserve the GOP as the party dedicated to opposing wokeness, antisemitism and appeasement, whether it comes from the left or the far right. (JNS Jun 30)

The Shin Bet has No Business Marking 'Pride Month'

By Ruthie Blum

If the reaction to Israel Security Agency chief David Zini's cancellation of "Pride Month" events in his organization is any indication, progressives in the Jewish state still haven't grasped the lessons of Oct. 7.

The outcry was immediate and furious.

Opposition leader Yair Lapid called Zini's conduct toward gay employees "a disgrace," insisting that "there will be no place for such dark views in Israel's public sphere."

Democrats Party chairman Yair Golan declared that "LGBTQ people are not a threat to Israel's security," adding that "discrimination, extremism and messianism are the threat."

The Aguda, Israel's leading LGBTQ advocacy organization, said it was "shocked" by the move and demanded that Zini reverse course immediately. The organization stressed that Zini should focus on the "unprecedented security threats" that Israel is currently facing, instead of "silencing and excluding his LGBTQ employees."

There's a hoot. It's precisely because of those threats that the Shin Bet—the Israel Security Agency—should not be distracted. Certainly not by arguments over rainbow flags.

Naturally, however, the criticism of Zini—whose very appointment as head of the ISA was treated by the left as an affront—has been framed as a battle between enlightenment and bigotry, inclusion and exclusion, tolerance and homophobia.

Talk about nonsense cloaked in empty slogans.

The real issue has nothing to do with whether homosexual employees are valued members of the Shin Bet. Of course they are. Nobody is suggesting otherwise.

Gay men and women serve throughout Israeli society, including in the military, intelligence community, judiciary, academia, media and politics. Israel hosts some of the largest Pride events in the world. Tel Aviv's annual parade draws enormous crowds, as does the Pride march in the holy city of Jerusalem.

Israel even has a Knesset speaker, Amir Ohana, who is not only openly gay but whose partner and children regularly attend official events. And prior to his entry into politics, Ohana served for a decade in Israel's defense establishment, six years of which were in the Shin Bet.

In other words, the notion that the agency needs to mark "Pride Month"—and that ceasing the practice constitutes discrimination—is utterly absurd.

The question is not whether LGBTQ Israelis deserve equal treatment. It's whether the Shin Bet exists to advance social causes. The answer should be obvious.

The Shin Bet's mandate is to thwart terrorism, uncover espionage networks, protect state institutions and prevent attacks against Israeli citizens. The agency isn't a university campus. It's not a human-resources laboratory. Nor is it an advocacy organization.

In the wake of Oct. 7, one would think that this point was clear, rather than a bone of contention. A silly one, to boot.

After all, the Hamas massacre exposed catastrophic failures throughout Israel's security establishment. Thousands of terrorists crossed the border. Communities were overrun. Soldiers and civilians were slaughtered, tortured, raped and kidnapped.

In the aftermath, we Israelis have been demanding soul-searching and accountability. We've been fighting over which figures at the top deserve the lion's share of the blame.

The last thing that is, or should be, on our minds is identity/gender politics. Being busy figuring out how to stay alive has taken precedence.

That's why Zini deserves accolades. It's not merely that he nixed a planned Pride event, but that he redirected the LGBTQ forum's earmarked funds back into the agency's general budget.

Supporters of the move rightly believe that such resources should be devoted solely to security missions. Indeed, every shekel allocated by the Shin Bet should be scrutinized through one lens alone: Does it improve the agency's ability to protect Israelis?

If the answer is no, then taxpayers have every right to be miffed.

This principle applies equally to causes across the political spectrum. A security service should not sponsor Pride events, religious-outreach programs, environmental campaigns, climate-awareness initiatives or any other ideological or social agenda.

The moment a security agency begins embracing fashionable causes, it risks undermining the public trust that is essential to its mandate. The Shin Bet serves all Israelis: secular and religious, left and right, Jewish and Arab, gay and straight.

To do so effectively, it must remain institutionally neutral.

ISA employees are free to hold whatever views they wish. They're at liberty to participate in any lawful activities they choose on their own time. But the organization itself should not be in the business of bending to trends.

Ironically, those accusing Zini of politicizing the Shin Bet are demanding that the agency continue engaging in precisely the sort of institutional activism that blurs the line between professional responsibilities and social advocacy. And the louder their outrage resounds, the more revealing it becomes.

Why should a decision to eliminate Pride-themed screensavers, flags, stickers and internal programming inside a counter-terrorism agency be treated by woke Israelis as some kind of a scandal? Why is such activity viewed as an essential function of the organization in the first place?

Let's not forget that Iran remains committed to Israel's destruction. Hamas is battered but not eradicated; ditto for Hezbollah. The Houthis are still lurking. Antisemitism is surging worldwide. And then there are the Palestinians illegally residing in or repeatedly entering Israel for nefarious purposes who have to be monitored at all times.

Against this backdrop, a national debate over whether the Shin Bet should host "Pride Month" activities seems detached from reality. Thankfully, despite attempts to portray Zini as a villain, most of the country realizes that his directive doesn't reflect his views on homosexuality. It's all about priorities. (JNS Jun 27)
