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ISRAEL NEWS

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Commentary...

The Gaza War Is Over By Amit Segal

It's Thursday, October 9, and as I drove to work this morning, I heard something strange on the radio, and then I realized: for the first time in 734 days, I was hearing pure, unrestrained joy. Finally, Israel and Hamas have struck an agreement to end the war and return the hostages home.

There's a lot to discuss here, and it's very much still a developing situation, so let's go through what you need to know. As of writing, the deal was set to be signed at midday Israel time, with the ceasefire in Gaza going into effect once Benjamin Netanyahu's government approves it this evening.

According to Donald Trump, the hostages will come home on Monday, including "the bodies of the dead." Others, however, have suggested that they may return to Israel as early as Saturday or Sunday. Unfortunately, it currently appears that there are eight or nine bodies of dead hostages that Hamas simply cannot find, and as a result, they will not be returned to Israel.

So, what happens once the hostages whose locations are known are home? There's no phase two of the deal, that's for sure. Yes, phase two might happen someday, but it's unrelated to what's just been signed, which is a hostage release deal—and one that doesn't say anything about the future.

Theoretically, fantasies could come true: Emiratis and allies dismantling terror tunnels, and an international body formed to oversee Gaza, with Tony Blair as its governor. But for now, these are not part of the negotiations. What we currently have is a hostage release deal and a ceasefire while talks continue in good faith.

That, of course, raises the question: who decides if talks are happening in good faith?

Under Trump, Israel has previously said that negotiations aren't genuine or productive, and resumed fighting. This time, however, I don't think we'll see IDF tanks rushing back into Gaza, like what happened when the last two ceasefires ended.

Another question: are we moving towards the Lebanese model? In other words, the IDF stays beyond the international border and strikes targets from the air when it detects military buildups or threats. When it comes to attempts to harm Israelis, there's no grey area. What we're talking about, however, is military buildup efforts, such as digging new tunnels or building more arms-producing lathes.

This is what Israel wants to retain the ability to strike, and the assessment in Jerusalem is that Trump will approve it.

As for the withdrawal from Gaza, the IDF will leave 47 percent of the strip, a slight increase from the initial 43 percent that was reported. In other words, for now, it will retain control of more than half of Gaza. Once that takes place, talks will be based on the principle of further Israeli withdrawals in return for demilitarization. But don't get too excited. Hamas is unlikely to disarm willingly, and the Emiratis and other international forces won't achieve that quickly either.

So, is this peace? I'll admit that when I hear people saying that Israel is "making peace with its enemies," I smell the Oslo Accords in the air and all the implications it carries. This is not peace, and Hamas is still Israel's bitter enemy—it has simply been brought to its knees.

Can Netanyahu's government survive this deal? To avoid any doubt, the cabinet will meet at 17:00 Israel time today and overwhelmingly approve the deal, with the government set to do so afterwards, because in this regard, the prime minister doesn't lack a majority.

But whether his coalition survives after that is a different question entirely, largely thanks to Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir—and even some Likud ministers. Israel, they will argue, had a chance to prove once and for all that whoever starts wars with us loses territory forever. At the same time, they believe that Jerusalem must allow no foreign presence—be it Emirati, French, or American—in Gaza.

But they have even greater grievances with this deal. From their perspective, after suffering its worst ever massacre, the Jewish state had a historic, one-off opportunity to fix the great sin of the 2005 disengagement and resettle

Gaza.

Well, none of that is happening, and the demands of the government's far-right flank are now off the table—making it hard for Smotrich and Ben Gvir to remain in Bibi's coalition. Now, add on top of that the fact that both ministers see an advantage in resigning at some point in preparation for an election campaign, especially with the finance minister sitting beneath the electoral threshold in every poll.

Ok, so why haven't they left yet? Despite their opposition to the deal, I believe they'll wait for the hostage release to be completed. And don't forget: the Knesset summer recess only ends on October 19, so no matter what tricks they pull, the government cannot be toppled before then.

Once the Knesset is back, a lot depends on the direction Netanyahu decides to take. For example, what platform will he run on in the election? He certainly has one option to pitch the country: that he's steering the Jewish state through stormy waters, and as a result, Israelis should vote for him despite the failure of October 7. As for Trump, I suspect that he'll work overtime to help Netanyahu remain in the Prime Minister's Office.

At the end of the day, these are all issues that on October 8, 2023, we never imagined that we'd face: elections in a post-war Israel.

This deal proves that military pressure brings hostages home. In the end, hundreds of IDF soldiers fell during this ground operation. They fell while initially defeating Hamas as a military force, then eliminating Hamas as an army, and finally creating conditions for this deal.

The problem with the question of whether military pressure brings hostages home is that people tend to imagine soldiers breaking into tunnels to rescue hostages, which is not what happened here.

The question we need to ask is what made Hamas cave? There were two key factors. One is the existential threat it now faces. Secondly, and ironically, the push into Gaza City, despite opposition from the IDF chief and much of the public, alongside warnings that hostages would be killed in the operation, made Hamas realize the hostages weren't as valuable as it thought.

Until today, Hamas thought it could play the hostage card and Israel would freeze. But the moment Hamas realized its view of the hostages was likely mistaken, and that the hostages might disappear, preventing Hamas from using them as a weapon, the terror group decided to end this now to avoid its total destruction.

The last time the Knesset convened during the festival of Sukkot was on October 16, 1973. Prime Minister Golda Meir stood before the plenum to announce that the IDF had crossed the Suez Canal into Egyptian territory. That was the moment it became clear to everyone that the tide of the Yom Kippur War had turned. The leader of the opposition, Menachem Begin, rose after her and quoted Winston Churchill: "What is our aim? It is victory—victory at all costs."

On October 12, 52 years later, barring any last-minute change, Donald Trump will address the Knesset. The accent will be Golda's, who grew up in Milwaukee; the language less restrained than Begin's.

Despite the separation of more than half a century, the situation is strikingly similar: a war that began with a surprise attack on Israeli soil ends beyond the enemy's lines. A sober look and an honest reckoning will show a victory greater than it may appear through the unbearable pain of war—through news of another fallen soldier, the hostage videos, and the grim procession of bodies from Gaza that at times seemed endless.

Even after the 1967 Six-Day War, there were those who struggled to grasp the scale of the achievement. The writer Yovav Katz captured that ambivalence in his bittersweet song, *My Daughter, Are You Crying or Laughing?*, about a young girl from Kibbutz Gadot in northern Israel, who emerges from a shelter at the war's end only to find her home destroyed by shelling:

Look up, my daughter, to the mountain,
The mountain that was like a monster
There are still cannons, my child, on the mountain,
But they now threaten Damascus.

After two years of war, the IDF's cannons—or more precisely, its fighter jets—now threaten Damascus. They have struck six Muslim capitals. Gaza, once the world's epicenter of terror, lies in ruins. Hamas no longer threatens Israelis, and if Israel resists the temptation to return to its old habits of restraint, it will not rise again. Iran has been dealt a severe blow, and its nuclear project crippled. Hezbollah—Israel's most dangerous enemy since Gamal Abdel Nasser's Egypt—is taking hits daily and no longer dares fire even a single mortar at the Jewish state.

For the first time, there is real hope that children living near the Gaza border will grow up without sirens and rocket alerts every few weeks. There will be no new “round” with Gaza anytime soon—and if there is, it will take place under entirely different conditions. For the first time in two generations, the security of Israeli citizens matters more than the exact line of the international border—in Lebanon, in Syria, in Gaza, and even in the skies above Tehran.

In the War of Independence, one percent of Israel's population was killed, yet everyone understood that it ended in victory—a victory that is still celebrated to this day. This war, too—though it has yet to be given a name—will be remembered the same way.
(It's Noon in Israel Oct 9)

What Have We Learned Since Oct. 7? By Caroline B. Glick

Oct. 7, 2023, was the worst day in the history of the State of Israel and will be remembered as such for all time. But as New York Times columnist Bret Stephens noted in a column analyzing the lessons of that day and the war that followed, “For all its undoubted horrors, this war may ultimately be remembered as liberating.”

Israel responded to Hamas's day of genocide by waging war to destroy the Iran axis of which Hamas was a member. Stephens explained how Israel's war had liberated the peoples of the region.

In Lebanon, thanks to Israel's decimation of Hezbollah, the people are free from Iran's proxy for the first time in 20 years. Hezbollah's decimation fomented the fall of Syrian dictator and Iranian proxy Bashar Assad, providing the people of Syria their first shot at freedom in living memory.

Living under the protection of the IDF, the Druze in southern Syria have an opportunity to navigate their future safely. Following Israel's successful military operation campaign—joined by the United States—to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons and amassing an arsenal of tens of thousands of ballistic missiles, the Iranian people have their best opportunity in 46 years to oust their regime of terror and build a future of freedom for themselves.

And with Hamas crippled, Gazans have their first chance in 20 years to live a life free of the jihadist regime, if they choose to grasp it.

While his list was comprehensive, Stephens shied away from mentioning how Israel achieved this list of dazzling victories following the greatest disaster in its history.

On Oct. 8, when IDF forces were still fighting inside the kibbutzim that had been overrun by Hamas the previous day, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told his still stunned cabinet that Israel would recover from the savage carnage of the previous day and it would transform the Middle East.

At that same meeting, the top military commander told Netanyahu and his ministers that they must forget about seeing the 251 men, women and children who had been taken hostage the day before ever again.

Netanyahu rejected his claim and insisted that with the proper mix of massive force and negotiation, Israel would defeat Hamas and return all of the hostages. So far, Israel has returned 205 hostages, 148 alive and Hamas is on the verge of total destruction.

Thanks to U.S. President Donald Trump, Israel may see the return of the last 48 hostages within days.

For the first 15 months of the war, Netanyahu led Israel in this war while facing a hostile administration in Washington. The Biden administration adopted a passive-aggressive policy of slow walking arms and then embargoing them altogether, while demanding that Israel not take military actions, like seizing control over Gaza's international border with Egypt, which were critical for victory.

In the midst of Israel's war for national survival, the Biden administration presented itself as Israel's stalwart defender, but worked with anti-Netanyahu groups and politicians to undermine the government.

Netanyahu didn't buckle. He stayed true to the course. If Netanyahu had listened to the Biden administration or his political rivals and enemies, who pressed to end the war without victory, Hamas's terror chiefs would still be alive. Hezbollah would still control Lebanon.

Assad would still control Syria. Iran would be on the verge of declaring itself a nuclear-armed state and amassing an arsenal of tens of thousands of ballistic missiles that would threaten not only Israel's existence but the security of the entire world.

Stephens' decision to ignore the prime minister's pivotal role as Israel's leader in this war isn't surprising. Before enumerating the ways that Israel has liberated the region, Stephens wrongly accused Netanyahu of responsibility for Oct. 7.

Stephens wrote that Netanyahu was willing to “tolerate Hamas,” out of “ideological convenience.” But the opposite is true. Netanyahu resigned from then-Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's government in 2005 in opposition to Sharon's plan to withdraw from Gaza.

Netanyahu warned at the time that the move would bring Hamas to power. As prime minister from 2009, Netanyahu fought the Hamas regime continuously.

Stephens also claimed that Israel's perceived weakness in the months before Oct. 7 owed to “the Netanyahu government's heedless push for a judicial ‘reform’ that looked to millions of Israelis like a lunge toward authoritarianism.”

There was nothing remotely “authoritarian” about the minor checks the Netanyahu government sought to place on Israel's judiciary's currently unchecked powers. To the extent that Israel was perceived as weak in the months that preceded Oct. 7, that perception was driven by the unprecedented campaign to dismantle the IDF's elite reserve units carried out by deep-pocketed, well-connected political actors.

In a bid to blackmail Netanyahu and his ministers into abandoning their effort to reform Israel's judicial system, in the months ahead of Oct. 7, leaders of the Left's anti-government campaign proclaimed that thousands of reservists from elite IDF units were refusing to serve.

Since Oct. 7, we learned that Hamas repeatedly cited the anti-IDF campaign in its media, intelligence reports and planning sessions as proof that Israel was vulnerable to invasion and destruction.

Stephens titled his article, “Lessons from a Long War.” Two lessons escaped his notice. First, the Israeli people, and particularly the soldiers in our citizens' army, are a nation of heroes. Contrary to the expectations of its enemies, Israel's staying power is stronger and longer than theirs.

Additionally, national leadership is crucial. Without competent and courageous leadership, even the bravest soldiers and nations falter. Netanyahu, Israel's longest-serving leader, has stood the challenge. His strategic wisdom and his moral courage and willpower in Israel's longest war have proven him worthy of the nation that he leads at this critical time in its history. (JNS Oct 8)

Hamas's Demand for the Sinwar Bodies: Preparing for a ‘Victory Funeral’ By Edith Druyan

The Wall Street Journal revealed this week that Hamas is demanding the bodies of Mohammed and Yahya Sinwar as part of ongoing negotiations.

This is not a bureaucratic or symbolic gesture. It exposes once again what truly drives the terrorist organization: propaganda and perception. Not human life, not the reconstruction of Gaza, not the future of its people.

Hamas's goal is purely psychological, to turn even death into a stage for its narrative of resistance and victory.

What does Hamas want?

It wants a spectacle, a “victory funeral.”

It wants to parade the Sinwar's bodies as martyrs, to dramatize its supposed defiance of Israel, and to broadcast to the Arab world and to Gazans themselves that it has not been defeated.

For Hamas, every such scene is a propaganda triumph. Even when Gaza lies in ruins, its leaders hide underground and thousands

of families have lost everything, the organization clings to images that sustain the illusion of victory.

This is not new. Since Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas has never deviated from this mindset.

It continues to demand, threaten and manipulate humanitarian frameworks to serve its propaganda goals. Every negotiation becomes a stage. Every delay becomes proof of its supposed strength.

Even in its dealings with the United States, and despite Qatari mediation, Hamas plays a double game. It sits at the table pretending to negotiate while simultaneously dictating terms as if it had already won the war.

The deal being discussed in Washington is not an end point but the beginning of yet another drawn-out process in which Hamas will extract every ounce of symbolic leverage it can.

How can a terrorist organization that should be humiliated and isolated still manage to impose its narrative on global discourse?

Because Hamas understands something its enemies often forget: in modern conflict, perception is power.

While Israel focuses on military operations, Hamas weaponizes every image, every word and every hint of weakness, turning military defeat into imagined victory.

We have seen this before. Every time Hamas has returned hostages or the bodies of hostages, it has done so as part of a calculated performance.

The return of the Bibas family's bodies, the mother and her two children, baby Kfir and Ariel, was perhaps the most grotesque example.

The three bodies were displayed publicly on a stage in Gaza, covered with black boxes labeled with their names and photos, as Hamas operatives stood by and announced the return of the blood captives.

The desecration was so extreme that even the U.N. Human Rights Council condemned it as utterly despicable, a violation of basic human dignity and every moral principle.

This is why symbolic gestures matter.

Every concession in tone, every soft diplomatic message, every humanitarian gesture that appears innocent, these are in Hamas's eyes fuel for its propaganda machine.

Hamas is not seeking peace or relief for Gazans, it is seeking to restore its lost prestige in the Arab and Muslim world through spectacle.

Israel and the international community must recognize that this war is not only about territory or hostages, it is about the narrative itself.

When Hamas demands the return of bodies, it is not trying to end suffering. It is preparing for a "victory funeral," the ultimate act in its grotesque theater of resistance. (JNS Oct 9)

Jewish Anti-Zionists and their 'Extroversionization'

By Yisrael Medad

I spotted an advertisement for an IfNotNow Los Angeles "Sukkot Mobilization & Mass Interfaith Rally" scheduled to take place on Oct. 9. Among the themes were Israel's blockade of the Gaza Strip, and famine conditions inflicted on Palestinians with "hundreds dying by starvation and thousands more on the brink of death."

The ad invokes "Jewish tradition" to protest all this and invokes the mantra, "As Jews ... we all must choose to act right now ... to speak out—no to starvation, no to invasion."

As the event is scheduled for the festival of Sukkot, they will "gather for a mass Jewish-led interfaith rally" and "celebrate the abundance of the agricultural year."

Hamas is not mentioned. Not the shelling of Israel, not their holding hostages, not their shelling of humanitarian-aid distribution centers or their killing of Gazans who seek peace and coexistence with Israel. Jews being killed, injured, attacked and assaulted around the world—from Los Angeles to New York, from Toronto to Melbourne, from Paris to Berlin and in Manchester—in the name of pro-Palestine positions and sympathy with Hamas was all omitted.

Jews forgetting Jews.

The anti-Israel journalist Peter Beinart recently interviewed Hannah Einbinder, she of the Emmy Awards "Free Palestine" shoutout.

On Yom Kippur, near the Brooklyn Bridge, Rabbis4CeaseFire

(Rodfei Shalom) conducted a blocking of the highway. This included many participants (rabbis all?) donning keffiyehs. They also mimicked the prostration act done during the fast day's traditional Mussaf service, included to remind ourselves of the Temple worship procedure—a Temple, though, that they reject.

New York state assemblyman Zohran Mamdani, the Socialist Democrat running for New York City mayor, was New York Rep. Jerry Nadler's and City Comptroller Brad Lander's guest (Mamdani wore a kippah) at the anti-Zionist hub of Congregation Kolot Chayeinu. British Prime Minister Keith Starmer and his Jewish wife, Victoria, following the Manchester terror attack on Yom Kippur, visited the Liberal Jewish Synagogue in St. John's Wood, North London, later that day.

Still in the United Kingdom, as Yom Kippur began, members of the anti-Zionist Na'amod group gathered outside the Labour Party Conference to sound the shofar for the delegates inside to accept the motion that Israel is committing genocide and to promote an arms embargo of Israel.

Jews are tokenizing Jewish customs, and non-Jews are taking advantage of the opportunity these Jews have awarded them. For example, an extended ramification is the poll conducted by and published in The Washington Post on Oct. 4, headlined: "Many American Jews sharply critical of Israel on Gaza" and sub-headlined "Most Jews say Israel is committing war crimes." I am no expert on polls, but as there were 815 respondents, I would suggest the poll's representativeness of a true cross-section of American Jews is fairly weak.

One person quoted in the story, Max Parke, 38, a software engineer in Brooklyn, N.Y., said that "the fastest way to improve conditions in Gaza is for the U.S. to restrict aid to Israel or impose conditions on it." He then added that "Jewish principles would say we need to respect everyone's humanity. In Israel, that is not the case; it privileges Jewishness in countless policies, without following actual Jewish principles."

In the first case, it would seem more logical that Hamas releasing the remaining 48 hostages would be the fastest solution. As for his second point, the Jewish state "privileges Jewishness" in the sense that while every citizen has all civil and political rights assured, the state is a Jewish state. Its ethos and cultural character are Jewish. It preserves Jewishness.

Parke's thinking may appeal to the younger progressive, less-than-traditional Jewish generation, but is it fair that they present themselves as reflecting Jewish culture, history, religion and experiences? By the way, a Max Parke living in Brooklyn and listing his position as a software engineer has a Facebook account, but I found no Jewish content, which leads me to wonder how the respondents were selected.

These Jews for Palestine have little regard for Israel or its people. Their Judaism appears mostly external in that they display Jewish customs and religious objects more at rallies and political protests than among themselves. They exploit these symbols so they can portray themselves in a moral tone wrapped in quaint spirituality. The hostages, if they appear on the agenda at all, are incidental. Hamas, Gaza and Palestine are uppermost of their campaign.

Moreover, rejecting Zionism is most un-Jewish, with no authentic basis in Jewish thought, history and practice.

Michael Doran (for the record, not Jewish), writing at the Free Press website, notes the "casting Israelis as 'white colonizers' and Palestinians as 'oppressed peoples'" as a tactic of the progressives whereby "Zionism becomes ... a uniquely nefarious form of settler colonialism" which then "shades into rank antisemitism." Jewish anti-Zionists know this well yet still proceed with their sit-ins, sit-downs, marches and other activities that provide a so-called Jewish cover to the above.

For all intents and purposes, these Jews employ their Judaism as running interference for the most vicious enemy of the Jews: the Arabs-cum-"Palestinians," whose goal is the elimination of the Jewish state and the killing of as many Jews as possible in the process.

Their approach stems not from analysing Jewish sources, although they purport to do so, but from their secular political beliefs that stretch across an expanse from liberalism to progressivism to globalism. We have witnessed anti-Zionism in the Jewish Enlightenment era, in early Reform Judaism thinking and Socialist

Bundist ideologies.

Jewish anti-Zionists are not bringing Judaism's principles or practices, nor any Jewish principles to their politics and political theatrical performances. Rather, they dress up their radical ideologies in a Jewish disguise for show. They are being antithetical to genuine Jewish ideals.

In more than one sense, they parade a form of cultural appropriation in reverse by adopting elements of their minority culture in a way that is disrespectful, exploitative or without proper understanding. I would even reinterpret a term from psychology studies and suggest their anti-Zionism is a form of "extraversion," orienting themselves toward the outer world of people and things with a "hey, look at me" tack.

Unfortunately, they misrepresent Judaism, its values and traditions while endangering Judaism as a religion, nationality and culture, and, in the end, Jews as humans. They can wrap themselves up in prayer shawls and fake perform rituals, but that's not truly being Jewish.

(JNS Oct 6)

It's Time to Hold the Media to Account

By Richard Landes and Lauri B. Regan

Congress held hearings last year that shed a stark public light on the shocking attitudes and behaviors of the heads of social-media platforms and the presidents of elite universities. These sessions revealed just how far both American colleges and the social-media platforms had drifted from their public pretensions, revealing a secret that only insiders knew beforehand. The public can now make an informed choice on how much to rely on information provided by such platforms or which universities they will entrust with their children.

The time has come for Congress to subpoena the heads of the legacy media—publishers of The New York Times and The Washington Post, in addition to presidents of the Associated Press, CNN, NBC and other network news stations and agencies—and require them to testify about the way in which their organizations report the Israel-Hamas war. Studies indicate that their coverage aligns closely with the Hamas war propaganda narrative—not just what they report but also in what they do not report. In fact, one recent study "alleges that major U.S. and European news outlets served as uncritical megaphones for Hamas-linked narratives."

Israel, on the front lines of the war against Western civilization, is not simply fighting for its own survival. It serves as the boots on the ground for U.S. national security as well. And yet, for some inexplicable reason, the media is ostensibly rooting for the terrorists, playing an active role in furthering Hamas's war goals—the destruction of the Jewish homeland—and international jihad war strategy to "globalize the intifada."

As Hamas and its "journalists" release blood libel after blood libel on seemingly a daily basis, Western news outlets relay these inflammatory tales of Israeli cruelty causing Palestinian suffering (the AP recently published a sympathetic report on injured Hezbollah terrorists who "can no longer play football"), fake casualty numbers, outlandish fantasies of mass starvation and faux war crimes that are often staged.

When they commit obvious and egregious errors (as they inevitably must with such a modus operandi), they refuse to admit or learn from them. When The New York Times leads a pack of lethal journalists in publishing staged and faked footage of "starving" children even as they pass over counterevidence, it becomes clear that traditional news organizations have dropped all pretense to professional standards, all scrutiny of sources they support and now act as propaganda arms of terrorist organizations. Photoshopped images and lies about the Israel Defense Forces and U.S. contractors shooting Gazans seeking food, make the absurd (Israel is committing genocide) not only believable but difficult to deny.

Frighteningly, with each reprint of Hamas propaganda, more and more Jew-haters are taking to the streets—no longer just to protest and disrupt civil society, but to actually kill Jews and their supporters. Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro, Israel embassy staffers in Washington, D.C. Yaron Lischinsky and Sarah Milgrim, 82-year-old Karen Diamond in Boulder, Colo., and many other Americans who have fallen victim to antisemitic execution, arson, and verbal and physical assaults since the Hamas-led terrorist attacks in southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, deserve (but will not get) a mea culpa from the

press. Short of that, they deserve to understand how the lies that fanned the flames of violence became "facts" worthy of dissemination without investigation. Everyone may be entitled to his or her own opinion, but not to their own facts, a maxim that particularly applies with professional rigor to news organizations.

When the propaganda arm of a jihadi terrorist organization, the manifesto of a Jew-shooter, the unified messaging of human-rights NGOs and the coverage of news outlets all align substantially—and the legacy news media takes no notice—something is deeply awry. This collective demonization campaign places Israel in an existential crisis, but it also has a much wider impact. As Hamas itself admits, it is part of a larger movement that seeks to rule over "all 510 million square kilometers of planet earth." As the Trojans demonstrated, no civilization—no matter how mighty—can survive having its own trusted sources of information feed them the enemy's war propaganda as news.

The public has a right and a need to know that a dangerous fraud is being perpetrated upon it. Just as the government has required tobacco and alcohol companies to place warning labels regarding the potential harm their products may cause, the public should be informed about the dangers of misinformation from news sources that claim to be trustworthy but that have chosen to present jihadi propaganda as facts.

Consumers have a right to know what product they are purchasing, and when a product is misrepresented, consumers in a democracy have recourse through government entities like the Consumer Protection Agency or Better Business Bureau. They can also turn to the courts for redress. This, however, is no ordinary consumer matter. Issues of free speech play heavily against government intervention here. Who's to say what's propaganda and not just an alternative narrative? Who's to prioritize "factual" over "narrative" journalism? Given the partisan ferocity currently prevalent, surely not the government.

On the other hand, this issue is unprecedented in the history of democracies and their foundational free press: the Fourth Estate. Our current "free press" consistently purveys the war propaganda of a movement profoundly hostile to any form of press freedom and joins them in their attack on the only participant in this regional conflict with a free press. Who could imagine that our news media would align their narrative with a jihadi propaganda campaign promoting a political culture that has eliminated any trace of a free press?

As we have painfully learned over the last 250 years of democracy, rights come with responsibilities. In order to claim the mantle of professional journalism, our "free" press needs to observe professional standards of scrutiny that their current approach systemically violates. At no time in the history of modern journalism has this happened on such a scale and for so long.

We have witnessed a devolution from professional war journalism to wildly unprofessional own-goal war journalism—from providing an honest check on the three branches of government to running enemy war propaganda as news, and from Fourth Estate to Fifth Column. How do we bring this startling inversion of the profession and the news it produces to the fore? How do we assess the danger to a free press that their advocacy constitutes? How do we counter so perverse a trend?

Congress not only has a role to play; it has a responsibility to bring this dangerous and shocking scandal to the attention of the American public. It is time to hold congressional hearings and hold the purveyors of this hateful propaganda to account. Let consumers see how often our journalists take staged footage, and edit and crop it to make it more believable. Let them see things the pack media won't cover, like the shocking genocidal hate speech that pervades the Palestinian public sphere. And then let the heads of our news agencies explain why they consider these items unfit to print while simultaneously reporting Hamas lies.

We are calling for accountability—for light to be shed on a suicidal brand of journalism that any sane audience, exposed to their folly, can and will reject of their own volition. Let this suicidal, advocacy news media be exposed for their impersonation of journalism. And let the viewing public—the American consumer—choose whether they wish to ingest the poisonous and deeply unprofessional fare our current news media have to offer, or look for other, more honest and accurate sources to understand our current troubling times. (JNS Oct 6)