



## 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*

genocidal war to  
slaughter Israelis and  
destroy Israel.

The Biden administration should also continue to call, as it has been doing, for the immediate and unconditional release of all the hostages held by Hamas. Moreover, the Biden

## Commentary...

### A 'Humanitarian Pause'—to Save Hamas?! By Bassam Tawil

The Biden administration has been pressuring Israel to agree to "humanitarian pauses" in the war against the Iran-backed Hamas terrorist group, whose members carried out the Oct. 7 massacre in which 1,400 Israelis were murdered and thousands more wounded. Hamas has also kidnapped more than 240 Israelis into the Gaza Strip, including toddlers, women and the elderly.

By calling for "humanitarian pauses" in the war, the Biden administration is throwing a lifeline to Hamas. A pause or a ceasefire would allow Hamas to regroup and prepare new attacks against Israel.

On Nov. 4, however, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, to his credit and that of the Biden administration, rebuffed calls for a ceasefire, as "such a halt right now would only allow Palestinian militant group Hamas to regroup and attack Israel again." The next day, however, Blinken continued his calls for "humanitarian pauses"—which Hamas would also use to prepare new attacks. As far as Hamas is concerned, any pause or ceasefire is a lifeline to help it attack.

"There was a ceasefire. It was before October 7," the new speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Mike Johnson stated, "and Hamas broke it."

David Friedman, former U.S. Ambassador to Israel, noted recently on Fox News that the shooting is not continuous, and that Israel is enabling the supply of humanitarian aid to southern Gaza all the time. He reported that in northern Gaza, Hamas had set up a large screen to present a film of Hamas's "greatest hits" last week to approximately 1,000 Gazans who turned out—so evidently there is sufficient electricity.

On Nov. 4, Hamas took advantage of a humanitarian window of opportunity that Israel gave to the residents of the Gaza Strip and carried out attacks with mortar fire and anti-tank missiles against Israelis. "While the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] were opening a humanitarian axis for the movement of Gaza residents to the south [of the Gaza Strip], terrorists from the terrorist organization Hamas attacked the forces involved in opening it," the IDF said.

The leaders of Hamas, who are hiding inside a network of tunnels, evidently care nothing for the well-being or safety of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Hamas has placed its military bases, rocket launchers, munitions storage and command posts inside, under or near civilian infrastructure, such as schools, hospitals, children's playgrounds, homes and mosques.

Hamas has also prevented civilians from fleeing to safe zones in the southern Gaza Strip. Hamas snipers have reportedly killed dozens of children and women attempting to travel there. This is all after Israel's repeated warnings to Gazans to go to the south of the Gaza Strip through safe corridors.

In the past week, Hamas used a "humanitarian pause" that Israel implemented under U.S. pressure to attempt to smuggle wounded terrorists into Egypt under the guise of an evacuation of injured civilians. Hamas's lies and deceit are consistent. A senior U.S. official revealed that Hamas tried to sneak some of its members out of the Gaza Strip in ambulances through the Rafah border crossing with Egypt.

A "humanitarian pause" would also mean supplying hundreds of thousands of gallons of fuel to Hamas's generators, which are used to provide clean air and electricity to its network of underground tunnels built, according to Hamas official Mousa Abu Marzouk, for the use of Hamas terrorists, not for civilians. According to U.S. officials, Hamas already maintains a stockpile of more than 200,000 gallons of fuel for its tunnels. Last week, the IDF released an audio recording of a call between a Hamas commander and the director of the Indonesian Hospital in the Gaza Strip, during which the commander said that Hamas is taking fuel from the hospital's stock.

The Biden administration should be denouncing Hamas for forcing Palestinians—about whom it cares so deeply that it shoots at them to prevent them from fleeing to safety—to die as human shields in its

administration might also call on Palestinians in the Gaza Strip to rise up against the terrorist group Hamas that is effectively holding two million Palestinians as hostages.

The Israeli victims of Hamas's Oct. 7 massacre were not given a chance to flee through a safe corridor. No one called on Hamas to accept a "humanitarian pause" as its terrorists were committing atrocities against Israelis that day in cities and towns near the Gaza Strip. The terrorists invaded Israel for one purpose: to murder, rape and kidnap as many Jews as possible.

Did Hamas take a "humanitarian pause" before they slaughtered hundreds of Israelis at a music festival? Did Hamas "pause" before they raped women? Did Hamas "pause" before they beheaded, dismembered and baked infants in ovens?

International human rights lawyer Arsen Ostrovsky asked: "Just out of curiosity, did Hamas have a 'humanitarian pause' when they came into our homes and murdered our children, decapitated babies, raped women, burnt entire families alive and took over 240 people, including infants and elderly, hostage?"

How come the United States did not consider a "humanitarian pause" during its war on Al-Qaeda and Islamic State? Why was the United States permitted to wage a relentless war on Al-Qaeda and ISIS terrorists, while Israel is being asked to provide humanitarian aid and fuel to the same group responsible for the worst massacre of Jews since the Holocaust? What are the chances that the humanitarian aid and fuel will actually go to Gaza's civilians—about whom Hamas's leaders care so much that they are forcing them to die as human shields—rather than to the leaders of Hamas for their cohorts?

Any cessation of the war on Hamas, even if temporary, would be considered a victory for the terrorist group and its supporters. Hamas and its patrons in Iran would be delighted to see a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip so that they can say that international pressure forced Israel to halt its war. Any "humanitarian pause" should start only after all the hostages have been released and all Hamas terrorists have either surrendered or been killed. (Gatestone Institute Nov 6)

### Hamas Represents a Very Important Part of the Palestinian People By Brig. Gen. (res.) Yossi Kuperwasser

We hear repeatedly from Western leaders, including U.S. President Joe Biden himself, that Hamas does not represent the Palestinian people. I beg to differ. There's a big part of the Palestinian people who consider Hamas their representative—not only in the Gaza street but even in Judea and Samaria. Hamas represents a very important part of the Palestinian people, something to bear in mind when we speak of "the day after" the war. On the ground, many civilians in the Gaza Strip followed Hamas operatives into Israel to loot and murder, while in the streets of Gaza, the attacks were celebrated.

For these reasons, Fatah—the ruling party of the Palestinian Authority—has avoided elections for the last 18 years since Hamas is likely to be victorious. P.A. leader Mahmoud Abbas's advanced age of 87 (he turns 88 next week) makes his rule fragile and precarious. He has already lost control of Samaria, and Hamas also enjoys the support of student unions at leading Palestinian universities. Since the Oct. 7 massacre, Hamas's support has grown in the West Bank from 44% to 58%.

As evident on Arabic social media, the Oct. terrorist attacks were seen as a historic victory for Islam. For years, both nationalistic, "secular" Fatah and Muslim Brotherhood, Islamist Hamas have used similar Quran-based, anti-Jewish rhetoric. Hamas's late religious leader, Sheikh Yousef Kardawi, encouraged terrorist acts against Jews in Israel, such as suicide bombings. Hatred for Israel and the Jews has kept Hamas popular despite its corruption and oppression of its citizens.

Both Hamas and Fatah share the same narrative: the denial of a Jewish identity and an opposition to Zionism—or Jewish sovereignty in nation-state form. They see Jews negatively and hope to replace Israel entirely. Hamas's aggressive, Islamist interpretation of Islam

glorifies murder and cruelty towards those it considers enemies of Islam.

An Israeli victory over Hamas also poses a theological challenge since it will be perceived as a humiliating blow to Islam, increasing bitter hatred of Israel. The massacre has been vocally supported by most Muslims around the world, including in the West's most populous cities. Muslims who oppose Hamas run the risk of being considered traitors by their co-religionists, so they remain silent.

Hamas leader Khaled Masha'al recently stated that the suffering, devastation and destruction of Gaza are necessary sacrifices to win the war against the Jews.

Concurrently with this aggressive rhetoric, Hamas and the P.A. market a component of Palestinian victimhood that demonizes Israelis to both their public and the West.

On their part, the West and the international community share a willful blindness in recognizing that Hamas represents a large part of the Palestinian population, and that Fatah's ideology is similar to that of Hamas. Admitting this would mean the West must accept Israel's claims about the difficulty of making peace with the Palestinians. The West prefers to believe that the defeat of Hamas will meet a cooperative population that would welcome a moderate leadership.

Who are the potential future Palestinian leaders after the Israel Defense Forces operation and after Abbas? The candidates are not promising. The once important PLO leader Muhammad Dahlan, originally from Gaza and now living in Abu Dhabi, is virulently anti-Israel, much like his corrupt and duplicitous mentor, Yasser Arafat. Salam Fayyad is another leadership option but is considered too weak to prevent terror in Gaza. Both are committed to the anti-Israel narrative.

Will other Arabs intervene? It is unlikely that the Gulf will intervene politically, but they probably will assist Gaza economically. On their side, the P.A. said through Prime Minister Mohamed Shtayyeh that the PLO is not interested in returning to Gaza unless it means the establishment of a permanent Palestinian state, an upgrade in the international community.

Without demanding that the Palestinians change the Israel-negative narrative, not much will come out of Israel's expected victory in Gaza politically. Any leadership imposed upon Gaza is destined to fail, as it did during the Oslo period and the Gaza disengagement.

Changing a narrative takes many years, at least a generation. Rebuilding Gaza is not just about the construction of buildings or infrastructure; it's about Palestinian narratives that have to be changed and reconstructed. This includes anti-Israel indoctrination in the educational system and incitement to terror, including payments to families of terrorists. Without first priority given to this fundamental change, Israel will have to unwillingly govern Gaza for a long period. (Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs Nov 6)

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## For America's Jews, Every Day Must Be Oct. 8

By Bret Stephens

There used to be a sign (which, for all I know, is still there) somewhere in the C.I.A.'s headquarters that read, "Every day is Sept. 12." It was placed there to remind the agency's staffers that what they felt right after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 — the sense of outrage and purpose, of favoring initiative over caution, of taking nothing for granted — had to be the mind-set with which they arrived to work every day.

There ought to be a similar sign in every Jewish organization, synagogue and day school, and on the desks of anyone — Jewish or not — for whom the security and well-being of the Jews is a sacred calling: "Every day is Oct. 8."

What was Oct. 8? It wasn't just the day after the single greatest atrocity against Jews since the Holocaust, an atrocity whose details were impossible to miss because the perpetrators made sure to film them. It was the day when that atrocity was celebrated. Not just in places like Tehran, but also on the streets of Manhattan and on too many college campuses. And it was the day in which, instead of it being universally denounced by institutional leaders, we began to see it often ignored or addressed in belated and carefully parsed statements of regret.

On Oct. 8, Jews woke up to discover who our friends are not.

Our friends are not those members of the Black Lives Matter movement — whose stickers and lawn signs so many American Jews posted in allyship after George Floyd's murder — who celebrated Oct. 7 with a post extolling the Hamas paragliders who slaughtered Jews at a music festival. B.L.M. chapters later apologized for the since-deleted

post, but the apology isn't accepted. They knew what they were doing.

Our friends are not those in organizations like Jewish Voice for Peace, which helped organize a much-photographed protest at New York's Grand Central Terminal, and which could hardly bring itself to say a word of condemnation for Oct. 7 before launching into lengthy justifications. Let's be clear: They and their sibling groups are being used as Jewish beards for aggressive antisemites.

Our friends are not those who, until recently, never mentioned that Gazan casualty figures come from a health ministry run by Hamas — a mistake they would never make if, say, they were relaying figures produced by the Russian government. Or who describe the people murdered on Oct. 7 as "Jewish settlers," never mind that they were living in towns and kibbutzim that are part of sovereign Israel. Or who speak of people who murder babies and kidnap elderly women as "fighters" or "militants."

Our friends are not at universities where every third building seems to be named for a Jewish benefactor. Schools like Stanford, which now defends the right of students to chant "from the river to the sea" — a call for the annihilation of an entire state — on free speech grounds are often the same places that, only recently, barred a student from campus for "racist social media posts." Free speech is fine as a standard, not as a double standard.

Our friends are not those in the academic and corporate D.E.I. offices or the diversity trainers who think that Jews don't count as a minority or who try to shunt Ashkenazi Jews into a "whiteness accountability" group. Diversity that thinks only of race is anti-diversity; inclusion that functionally excludes Jews is not inclusive; equity that treats Jews as second-class victims is not equitable. This should be axiomatic.

Our friends are not in the universe of people represented by the likes of Tucker Carlson and the guests on his show. Under the guise of a prudential foreign policy, the neo-isolationist right is morphing into the anti-Israel left, repeating its tropes that Israel is "annihilating Gaza." These are the people whose thinking would be mainstreamed by a second Trump term.

The list could be longer. Knowing who our friends aren't isn't pleasant, particularly after so many Jews have sought to be personal friends and political allies to people and movements that, as we grieved, turned their backs on us. But it's also clarifying. More than 3,800 years of Jewish history keeps yielding the same bracing lesson: In the long run, we're alone.

What can Oct. 8 Jews do? We can stop being embarrassed, equivocal or defensive about Zionism, which is, after all, one of the world's most successful movements of national liberation. We can call out anti-Zionism for what it is: a rebranded version of antisemitism, based on the same set of libels and conspiracy theories. We can exit the institutions that have disserved us: "Defund the academy" is a much better slogan than "Defund the police."

Jewish America abounds with dreamers and entrepreneurs who took crazy risks in their careers to find value and create things that never existed before. It's time they apply the same talent and energy to creating new institutions that hew to genuinely liberal values, where Jews need never be afraid. In time, the rest of America may follow. (New York Times Nov 7)

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## Sanctioning Jew-Hatred Doesn't Conflict with the First Amendment

By Jonathan S. Tobin

Members of the congressional "Squad" are always at their best when playing the victim. In that light, Nov. 7 was a banner day for Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-Mich.) as she tearfully assumed the mantle of martyrdom when the U.S. House of Representatives voted to censure her for statements "promoting false narratives regarding the October 7, 2023, Hamas attack on Israel and for calling for the destruction of the state of Israel."

The ramifications of the censure vote extend far beyond the halls of Congress. A growing chorus of antisemitic invective is being heard on America's streets and on college campuses. Similar efforts to call out those who call for Israel's destruction and in favor of terrorist atrocities against Jews are being resisted by those who claim that doing so is an unconstitutional and unethical effort to silence free speech or to enforce a pro-Israel version of cancel culture. Some assert that the anti-Israel protests—even those that clearly cross over into antisemitism—must not only be tolerated but that any effort to punish or subject to public opprobrium those who engage in such vicious behavior is evidence of intolerance of legitimate political

opinions. That includes those individuals who feel more than comfortable tearing down posters with the images of men, women and children being held captive in the Gaza Strip by Hamas.

Nobody is repealing anyone's First Amendment right to freedom of expression, no matter how hateful. But the right to say whatever you want—as long as it's not a direct incitement to violence—doesn't mean that the rest of society is obliged to treat those engaging in open antisemitism as respectable members of society. We have every right to censure or call them out for doing so. And in the wake of Oct. 7, as expressions of hatred for Jews and Jewish safety are becoming so widespread, it is more important than ever that those who are behaving in this fashion are treated in the same way society disdains neo-Nazis or avowed racists like members of the Ku Klux Klan.

Had a member of Congress expressed open racism against African-Americans, Hispanics or Asians, as well as supported violence against these groups, there would be no hesitation within either party about not just censuring but expelling them.

Elsewhere, the fact that some people openly sympathize with the cause of those advocating for the mass murder of Jews is an unfortunate fact. There is no doubt that universities would expel students or fire professors who supported the lynching of African-Americans or some other act of mass murder. And no law firm, corporation or mainstream publication would hire someone with that on their record. Nor would there be any movement within college administrations to help such people make their way in life, let alone be guaranteed the success that a degree from an elite school can bring.

But when it comes to those engaging in antisemitism, it appears any thought of public ostracism is controversial. This testifies to the mainstreaming of hatred for Jews not so much in the fever swamps of the far right or far left, but in the very institutions of academia, journalism and business that are the loudest in opposing racism against anyone else.

Indeed, mainstream institutions are slow even to acknowledge how this atmosphere has led directly to violence against Jews, including the apparent killing of a 69-year-old Jewish man in California by a pro-Hamas demonstrator. That publications like The New York Times were reluctant to label this as murder or a hate crime, even after they rushed to assert that the killing of a Muslim boy was the result of Islamophobia, is more evidence of the double standard at play here.

And that is the true scandal about post-Oct. 7 America.

Tlaib's attacks on Israel and President Joe Biden for his support for the Jewish state, in which she embraced the slogan "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free"—a call for the elimination of Israel and those who reside in it—led to the censure. Her smears of Israel as an "apartheid state" and false charges that it is committing "genocide" against Palestinians (which, in context, was clearly intended as a defense of Hamas "resistance" efforts) motivated Republicans to move ahead with the measure.

While Tlaib has disingenuously claimed that the "river to the sea" slogan is "aspirational" and merely an appeal for freedom, she is a supporter of the antisemitic BDS movement and has repeatedly called for Israel's elimination.

The vote in favor of censure was 234-188 with 22 Democrats breaking party discipline and crossing the aisle to vote to condemn Tlaib while four Republicans bucked their party to oppose it. Three other Democrats and one Republican merely voted "present."

Given the failure of past attempts to shame Tlaib in this manner, it's a significant step for the House. Censure has become a largely partisan tool in which both Republicans and Democrats condemn each other's outliers more to stoke partisan fundraising than any actual outrage. This vote matters because it labels her behavior as being so abhorrent that it forced at least some in her own party to treat it as beyond the pale.

Still, most Democrats didn't vote for censure. And only 67 signed on to a letter condemning the use of the "from the river to the sea" slogan as an obvious call for genocide of Israel's Jews, though without naming Tlaib.

The reason for this was partly partisan since in the current political environment, party labels mean far more to most politicians than principles. But according to Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-Md.), who is a popular figure among liberal Jewish Democrats, the real issue was "freedom of speech."

That's a similar theme being sounded by those who disagree with efforts to punish students and professors who express support for Hamas and echo Tlaib's antisemitic libels while also intimidating Jewish students. Similar arguments are heard in defense of those who march in the streets in support of Hamas's genocidal agenda or who

tear down posters with the images of Israelis who have been kidnapped and dragged across the border to the Gaza Strip, where they are being held by Hamas.

As New York Times columnist Michelle Goldberg, another avowed anti-Zionist, wrote this past weekend, as far as many on the political left are concerned, the question is: "When it comes to Israel, who gets to decide what you can or can't say?"

But the misnomer here is the false claim that Tlaib or students chanting for an "intifada" are engaging in "criticism" of Israel's government. If it were merely criticism of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu or his policies, there would be no issue. But the anti-Zionists don't want a different Israeli government or a Jewish state with alternative policies or borders. They want to "decolonize" Israel, which is to say, destroy it, evict or kill its Jews and replace it with a Palestinian state. And that state would—inevitably, like every other majority Muslim nation in the region—be one where adherents of other religions would, at best, be a discriminated-against minority whose safety would be subject to the whims of Islamists.

The reason why anti-Zionists are antisemites, regardless of whether some can claim Jewish ancestry, is that they advocate for treating Jews differently than any other people on the planet. They say that only Jews have no right to life and sovereignty in their ancient homeland, and as such, should be denied the right to self-defense against those seeking to slaughter them. That is what those demanding a ceasefire in Gaza so as to allow Hamas to survive and win the current war are doing, and it's nothing but discrimination. And let's be clear: Discrimination against Jews is antisemitism.

This is why the Jewish community has every right to demand that those who call for Israel's extinction be correctly labeled as antisemites. It is equally hateful to claim that antisemites should be tolerated or treated better than those who advocate for discrimination or violence against other minorities.

The awful atrocities of Oct. 7 were deeply traumatic for all Jews. But that injury has been compounded not just by the indifference of much of the world, including those who publicly comment about any tragedy, but by the way the mass slaughter of Jews has actually encouraged the spread of antisemitism throughout the world.

The problem for Jews is that a percentage of Americans support an ideology—left-wing intersectionality—that is squarely behind such discrimination and ready to rationalize, if not openly back, violence against Jews. We can see how this has already led to violence and the creation of an atmosphere in cities and colleges where Jews have good reason to fear for their safety.

That means that it is incumbent on institutions—whether they are universities, corporations or Congress—to demonstrate that while people who hold such views have every right to speak, march or publish, they do not have a right to be tolerated or treated as a respectable member of society. As long as they are being told by the arbiters of public opinion, like The New York Times, that their advocacy for violence against Jews is something that everyone should accept as legitimate and even acceptable discourse, Jews aren't safe in America ... or anywhere else. (JNS Nov 8)

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## **Obama's Moral Equivalence Between Hamas and Israel Encourages Hate** By Jonathan S. Tobin

In times of crisis, the public looks to its most revered leaders for insight and wisdom. But in the case of Barack Obama, the man who is, although nearly seven years into retirement, still America's most popular living public figure, politician and Democrat, what passes for wisdom is not only unwise but amoral.

After weeks without saying much of anything about the atrocities perpetrated by Hamas terrorists in southern Israel on Oct. 7, the 44th president has weighed in on the subject while appearing on a podcast hosted by former staffers Dan Pfeiffer and Tommy Vietor. In the wake of the greatest mass slaughter of Jews since the Holocaust, the most brazen example of terrorism on the international stage since 9/11 and amid a shocking spike in antisemitism, it's likely that many among the nearly two-thirds of American Jewry who were faithful supporters of Obama were hoping that he would say something to bring them comfort or at least take a strong stand in support of the Jewish state.

If you were looking to Obama for moral clarity, however, you came to the wrong shop. According to the former president, the main takeaway from Oct. 7 is that as bad as Hamas is, Israel is just as bad. "You have to admit that nobody's hands are clean, that all of us are complicit to some degree," he declared. That means acknowledging,

he continued, “that what Hamas did was horrific and there’s no justification for it. And what is also true is that the occupation and what’s happening to Palestinians is unbearable.”

In Obama’s moral universe, Israel’s alleged sins are as grievous as those of Palestinian terrorists who were cheered by their own people and their foreign enablers for depraved acts, including rape, torture, the murder of entire families and the kidnapping of as many as 240 men, women and children who were dragged back to Gaza. No stern judgments about terrorism or its backers from Obama. He thinks what’s needed is “an admission of complexity.”

While the comments of former presidents can often be dismissed as irrelevant to present-day discussions, the same cannot be said for anything uttered by Obama. He remains enormously influential among Democrats, especially among the large number of his former staffers who hold positions of influence in the government of President Joe Biden. Whether or not that amounts to Obama pulling the strings in his former vice president’s administration, there can be no doubt that when he speaks, everyone in the White House listens.

What’s more, it comes at a time when Biden’s stance in support of Israel and its goal of eliminating Hamas is under fire from his party’s base, causing both the president and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken to try to balance that with demands for “humanitarian pauses” in the fighting that would benefit Hamas. Polls show Biden losing to former President Donald Trump in key battleground states largely due to his losing support from minority and young voters who are more likely to be hostile to Israel. In that context, Obama’s proclamation of neutrality in the war between Israel and Hamas sends a message to the White House that if Biden wants another term—and withdrawing from the 2024 race is anathema to the president, even if many Democrats are hoping for it—then he will have to start distancing himself from the Jewish state.

Seen in that light, Obama’s podcast comments should be viewed with trepidation by supporters of Israel. Should Biden heed Obama and choose to use the leverage of U.S. military aid to put the brakes on the Israel Defense Forces’ operations in Gaza, it would allow those who perpetrated the crimes of Oct. 7 to both escape justice and maintain their despotic rule over the Strip.

The statement about the war was classic Obama in that his words were the usual mixture of high-flown rhetoric, faux intellectual gravitas and an appeal to a higher morality that when weighed against the truth and genuine ethics are pseudo-intellectual claptrap. Above all, it revealed his deep-seated inability to tell the difference between right and wrong, all the while proclaiming that he has unique insights to offer on this and any other question. That is especially true when he speaks of Israel and those who wish to destroy it.

This, after all, is not his first statement about moral equivalence with regard to Israel and the Palestinians.

In June 2009, during his first trip to the Middle East as president, Obama—who had pointedly decided not to include Israel in his itinerary—gave a speech in Cairo that he hoped would mark a “new beginning” in America’s relations with the Arab and Muslim worlds. At its core was an apology for past American policies towards Muslims and Iran, as well as an admission that the United States should not presume to tell other nations what to do. Another priority was a demand for Palestinian statehood, the lack of which he described as “intolerable.”

In the Cairo speech, he said calls for Israel’s destruction reminded Jews of the Holocaust. But in his next breath, he balanced that by saying that it was “undeniable that the Palestinian people—Muslims and Christians—have suffered in pursuit of a homeland. For more than 60 years, they’ve endured the pain of dislocation. Many wait in refugee camps in the West Bank, Gaza and neighboring lands for a life of peace and security that they have never been able to lead. They endure the daily humiliations—large and small—that come with occupation.”

In this way, he treated the slaughter of 6 million Jews as comparable to the political longings of Palestinian Arabs. Indeed, Palestinians had suffered. But unlike the Jews of Europe who were murdered by the Nazis, their problems stemmed from an Arab refusal to compromise over the future of what had been the British Mandate for Palestine. Rather than accept the U.N. partition of the country into a Jewish state and an Arab one, they chose to wage a war to ensure that there would be no Jewish state.

By 2009, the Palestinians had already rejected subsequent Israeli offers of statehood that would have given them control over Gaza, Judea, Samaria and a share of Jerusalem. And if they were enduring “daily humiliations” due to the existence of security checkpoints to

guard against suicide bombers, it was because of their decision to respond to those peace offers with the murderous Second Intifada that cost the lives of more than 1,000 Israelis while they rode buses to work and ate lunch in restaurants.

The quest for a two-state solution to the conflict between the Palestinian Arabs and Israel would be at the heart of Obama’s foreign-policy agenda in the White House. He would continue to ignore the fact that even the “moderate” Palestinians of the Fatah Party that ran the Palestinian Authority refused to accept the legitimacy of a Jewish state, no matter where its borders would be drawn. But not even his consistent efforts to tilt the diplomatic playing field in their direction could ever persuade Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas to make peace.

Yet Obama learned nothing from this, and he continues to see the two sides as moral equals even after Hamas exceeded the death toll of the intifada in a single day on Oct. 7. The contrast between Hamas terrorism and Israeli efforts to end the ability of these terrorists to continue their depredations, which does great harm to the Palestinians and to Jews, is not a matter of “complexity.” It is simply the difference between good and evil.

It is to the credit of Biden that, for all of his efforts to hamstring the Israeli offensive into Gaza, he recognized that difference Obama seems incapable of articulating.

Still, the implications of Obama’s appalling statement go beyond his own inability to rise above his always-simmering hostility to the Jewish state.

He has failed to understand that attitudes such as his are doing more than encouraging the chorus of criticism of Biden coming from left-wing Democrats. While he told his audience that they should recognize that Israelis and Jews remain haunted by the memories of the Holocaust, no Jew living in 2023 needs to consult with an elderly relative to know what it is like to live in a time of rising antisemitism. The mobs of left-wingers and Muslim-Americans marching in the streets of American cities in defense of Hamas and calling for Israel’s destruction—not to mention those roaming neighborhoods tearing down posters showing the images of Jews kidnapped by the terrorists—provide more than enough evidence that Jew-hatred is alive and well in our own time.

That Obama could speak of this topic and not condemn those demonstrations is telling. But as with his counsel to the Arabs in 2009, he views Jewish suffering as nothing more than an impediment to pressure the Israelis to make themselves more vulnerable to those who wish to commit genocide.

The events of Oct. 7 can also be directly linked to the signature foreign-policy achievement of his presidency. His 2015 Iran nuclear deal did nothing to prevent Tehran from gaining a nuclear weapon since it merely postponed that possibility. What it did do was to enrich and empower Iran, enabling it to maintain and expand its status as the world’s leading state sponsor of terror. It takes no leap of imagination to understand that this facilitated Iran’s support for Hamas in Gaza, as well as its Hezbollah auxiliaries in Lebanon.

In this way, we can see even more clearly now than before that Obama’s decision to pivot away from traditional allies like Israel and Saudi Arabia, and towards what he hoped would be a rapprochement with Iran was not merely wrongheaded. It was a disaster that would eventually be paid for in the blood of the Israelis slaughtered on Oct. 7.

Rather than acknowledge that his policies contributed to a situation where Iran and its allies felt they could escalate the conflict without fear of American retribution, Obama remains determined to treat Israel and those determined to destroy it, like Iran and Hamas, as morally equivalent.

His statement strengthens those who think they can force a weakened Biden to betray Israel and force it to allow Hamas to survive in power in Gaza. What’s more, his stance also provides antisemites who support Israel’s destruction on the streets and college campuses with the sort of legitimacy they don’t deserve.

A decent American Jewish leadership, which has belatedly recognized that its traditional left-wing political partners have betrayed them in the wake of Oct. 7, would condemn Obama’s statement. But so far, groups like the Anti-Defamation League, led by former Obama staffer Jonathan Greenblatt, have said nothing in response to it.

The decline of the American left into hatred for Israel and Jews is a tragedy. It is a moral catastrophe, however, that didn’t arise out of a vacuum. It was made inevitable by both the attitudes and the policies of Barack Obama. (JNS Nov 6)