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ISRAEL NEWS

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Commentary...

'He Has the Courage to Make Decisions' By Yaakov Lappin

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's decision to appoint Maj. Gen. Roman Gofman as the next director of the Mossad has sent ripples through Israel's defense and intelligence establishments, marking a dramatic shift in the leadership profile of the renowned intelligence agency.

The announcement, made during a Cabinet meeting on Dec. 8, places a combat-hardened general—who was seriously wounded fighting Hamas terrorists on Oct. 7, 2023—at the helm of an organization traditionally, though not exclusively, led by career spies.

Gofman is the classic field commander, who rose through the ranks of the Armored Corps. He commanded the 75th Battalion of the 7th Armored Brigade, the "Etzion" Regional Brigade, the 7th Brigade itself and the 210th "Bashan" Golan Division on the Syrian border, and as the head of the National Ground Forces Training Center at Tze'elim, where he was on Oct. 7, 2023, before rushing to the Gaza envelope upon hearing news of the Hamas invasion.

He was appointed head of headquarters in the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories Unit later in 2023, before becoming the prime minister's military secretary in May 2024.

Gofman is also a graduate of the Bnei David military yeshiva in El, north of Ramallah, a flagship institution of the religious Zionist camp.

The appointment comes at a critical juncture for the Mossad, which remains engaged in a shadow war with Iran and its proxies. According to a statement from the Prime Minister's Office, Gofman will replace current Mossad director David Barnea in June 2026, allowing for a handover period of some six months. This extended transition is widely seen as an acknowledgment of the steep learning curve facing an "outsider" who has spent years commanding tanks on the battlefield.

Netanyahu highlighted Gofman's unique mix of operational daring and strategic exposure, stating, "Roman is a highly accomplished commander in the IDF. He accompanied me last year in the 'War of Rebirth,' in 'Operation Rising Lion' [the 12-day war against Iran] he operated vis-a-vis the entire IDF and with emphasis on the Mossad."

"He has proven qualities of leadership, creativity, sophistication and cunning on a global scale. He has two other very strong qualities—initiative and striving for contact," Netanyahu continued. "He was the most senior officer in the IDF on Oct. 7 who ran to the battlefield. He was wounded there, recovered, and is doing tremendous work for Israel's security."

Yossi Amrusi, a former senior official in the Israel Security Agency (Shin Bet) and currently a research associate at the Misgav Institute for National Security and Strategy, told JNS in recent days that while the appointment of an external candidate is controversial given the Mossad's recent successes, Gofman possesses the core character trait required for the job.

"In the last war, Mossad worked in a phenomenal form. Its achievements in Lebanon with the operation of the beepers and the achievements in Tehran and in Iran in general with the intimate intelligence that it succeeded [in delivering] on the most senior officials in the Revolutionary Guards, the Iranian scientists, this is phenomenal work that will be taught in schools for espionage and intelligence for tens of years more," said Amrusi.

Given this track record, Amrusi argued that an internal promotion would have been the natural choice. "It was correct for the

organization that specifically one of its senior members be chosen, even as a token of appreciation to this organization that did such excellent work," he said.

At the same time, Amrusi argued, and despite the professional gap that Gofman will have to close in terms of the field of intelligence, the most critical decision, the ability to make bold decisions, is already firmly within Gofman's toolkit.

"In the end, the operations, and the ideas for them, as well as the ongoing intelligence activity, will be delivered by operatives in the field and the junior managers, the senior managers and the heads of divisions. Ideas will arrive at the end to the desk of the director of the Mossad, and he will have to deliver a decision: Do we do the operation, or do we not do the operation? Do we advance with this idea, do we not advance? And what is needed is courage, and Roman Gofman has courage," said Amrusi.

He pointed to two distinct events that he said proved Gofman possesses this quality—the Oct. 7 battles, and a 2019 conference of the entire IDF General Staff, where Gofman took the stage and challenged the IDF's defensive posture while only at the rank of colonel.

"A colonel is not a particularly senior rank... and still he stands in a hall with 300-400 officers, from the most senior ranks in the IDF, and speaks his mind without being ashamed. In my eyes this shows character, and courage," said Amrusi. "What did he see that all those 300 people [in the General Staff meeting] did not see? He has a different vision."

Amrusi also noted a video of Gofman, in which as an armored brigade commander addressed new recruits. "The most important thing is to be strict on the small details... in the end everything rests on the small details. This was a highly authentic leadership speech," said Amrusi.

The Mossad meanwhile announced on Dec. 10 that "A," a veteran operative, had been appointed as the next agency deputy director. "A," who was a candidate for the top job himself, has served in the organization for over two decades and commanded two operational divisions.

Brig. Gen. (res.) Yossi Kuperwasser, head of the Jerusalem Institute for Security and Strategy and former head of the Research and Assessment Division of Israel's Military Intelligence, told JNS that "as with all appointments, and particularly an external one, it is difficult to know in advance how successful he will be in expressing his abilities and advantages and overcoming gaps in knowledge and operational experiences."

An "observation of his career teaches that this is an officer with leadership and charisma and impressive learning ability, who in his last role learned to get to know well the activity of the Mossad, and therefore his chances to succeed are high," he continued.

Kuperwasser also noted that the "internal vs. external" debate is not always predictive of success.

"Sometimes appointments of worthy people from within the organizations did not lead to the hoped-for results and even ended in painful failures. There are no rules here, and one needs only to wish success to Roman Gofman, and to hope that the spirit of the Mossad, which is without doubt one of the best intelligence organizations in the world, will assist him," added Kuperwasser.

Gofman's appointment has received public backing from IDF leadership as well. Chief of General Staff, Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir met with Gofman on Dec. 4 to congratulate him. "Roman and I have known each other for many years, from his various positions in the Armored Corps to the roles he has held in recent years. Roman is a courageous, professional and experienced officer," said Zamir.

The chief of staff emphasized that "cooperation between the organizations [IDF and Mossad] is vital for the security of the state,

and that the IDF will stand behind him and provide any assistance required for his success in the role.” (JNS Dec 11)

The UN War on Israel’s High Ground By Moshe Phillips

The bureaucratic diplomats at the United Nations again demonstrated their addiction to attacking Israel’s best interests with a vote on Dec. 2 about the Golan. In a resolution sponsored by Egypt, 123 nations voted for Syrian control over the Golan Heights and for Israel to return to the June 4, 1967 lines.

The resolution received much more support than in 2024, when 97 nations voted against multiple generations of Israeli families remaining in their homes on the Golan. The resolution states that Israel’s decision in December 1981 to expand sovereignty must be rescinded.

What’s more, the U.N. General Assembly had a second vote on Dec. 5 that labeled Israeli communities on the Golan as “illegal.” A total of 146 nations voted in favor of this resolution.

Can you imagine the danger Israel would have faced last December when chaos enveloped Syria? Or if, on Oct. 7, 2023, Iranian proxy terrorists on a Syrian-controlled Golan had joined Hamas and Hezbollah, and opened up a third front against the Jewish state?

If Israel had surrendered to U.S. demands in the 1990s to give up the Golan Heights, how many Israeli lives would have been lost in the ensuing 25 years?

On March 25, 2019, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the following to U.S. President Donald Trump at the White House: “Mr. President, just as Israel stood tall in 1967, just as it stood tall in 1973, Israel stands tall today. We hold the high ground, and we shall never give it up. Mr. President, we have a saying in Israel. I’ll say it in Hebrew. It says, Ha’am im Hagolan. That means, ‘The people are with the Golan.’ But thanks to you, we now know that there are two peoples who stand with the Golan: the people of Israel and the people of America. So, on behalf of all the people of Israel: Thank you, President Trump.”

On the same day as the first U.N. vote about the Golan, Ronald S. Lauder, president of the World Jewish Congress, was speaking across town at the Israel Hayom summit in Manhattan. He stated that there is “a full-scale assault on truth, on democracy and on the safety of Jewish people everywhere.”

He could have said “everywhere at the United Nations” and been correct.

Additionally, Lauder declared that “there are Muslims and Arabs who reject terrorism, who reject extremism, who reject using Israel as an excuse for hatred. Let us build a coalition so strong, so united, so determined, that no extremist movement can fracture it.”

Lauder, who has served as president of the WJC since 2007, is demanding far too much from Israel. Israel cannot be expected to build this fantasy “coalition” while Hamas is still armed and in power in Gaza. In fact, it shouldn’t even be discussed now.

Truthfully, such ideas as this “coalition” have no place in the current Middle East era of autocracies, when there are no true democracies in the region besides Israel. The Arab world is legendary for revolutions and violent coups; it is beyond naive to suggest that Israel can risk a Palestinian state of any size just to be part of some anti-extremist “coalition” that could prove to be short-lived and extremely ineffective.

And make no mistake: A Palestinian state is the price that the Gulf sheikdoms and other authoritarian, repressive regimes that comprise the region would exact from Israel to launch this “coalition.”

In August 2025, Lauder said “the inciteful calls” from Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich to “bury the idea of a Palestinian state” are wholly unbecoming of a representative of the state of Israel.”

American Jewish leaders must come to understand that, to critics of Israel, there is no difference between “settlements” in Judea and Samaria and “settlements” on the Golan. When American Jews attack the rights of Jewish families to live in Judea and Samaria, the Israelis in the Golan are put even more at risk.

Just weeks after Lauder’s broadside against Smotrich, the Hamas-led terrorist invasion of communities in southern Israel caused Israelis who were previously open to it to rethink a Palestinian state.

Perhaps the best example of this is Israeli President Isaac Herzog, who in January said to CNN’s Fareed Zakaria, that “the idea of the two-state solution is something which, on record, I supported in the past, many times. But I would say that I had a wake-up call following Oct. 7, in the sense that I want to hear my neighbors say how much they object, regret, condemn and do not accept in any way the terrible tragedy of the terror attack of Oct. 7 and the fact that terror cannot be the tool to get there.”

It is long past time for American Jewish leaders to “wake up” and realize that, just as Israel’s leaders in the 1990s were right to stand with the Israeli communities in the Golan Heights, they are right today to support Israelis who wish to remain in Judea and Samaria, despite that critics such as U.N. diplomats, Zakaria and even Lauder dismiss these communities as “settlements.” (JNS Dec 8)

Onward, Christian Zionists! By Yisrael Medad

I trust that Sabine Baring-Gould, an Anglican priest and scholar, will forgive me filching my title from his 1865 hymn. As it is based on a New Testament reference, II Timothy 2:3, whose theme is shared suffering, I thought it appropriate.

Indeed, a few verses further in that chapter, we read, “the word of God cannot be chained!” and that harmonizes with the essential shared message of both Jewish and Christian Zionism.

The support for Zionism is under a renewed attack of opposition and invalidation. One stream of vitriol, of course, stems from the ideology that Judaism and Jews have been replaced. A second flow of animosity essentially is structured on hard-core antisemitism. A third current of negativity is predicated on the neo-Marxist progressive politics of defining Zionism as “colonialism.” The fourth wave has been the development of a Christian-based “Palestine liberation theology.”

It is to this last category that I wish to suggest instruments of countering false and subversive thinking. I do so especially after the convocation at the ancient site of Shiloh on Dec. 5, when 1,000 American Christian leaders and influencers toured the area as part of perhaps the largest public-diplomacy mission in Israel’s history to pray, and express solidarity and support.

The event was initiated by Christian Zionist leader Mike Evans and the Friends of Zion. In his address before the assembly, he said: “The policy of the God who birthed America and the policy of the God who gave these people this land is, in fact, that Judea and Samaria is Bible land ... in Shiloh was the capital of Israel. This is where the Samuel was, and the Tabernacle was. It was all right here ... don’t pressure Israel to give illegal, radical, Islam, Jew-haters: Judea and Samaria.”

One of our major tasks, we who are Zionists—whether Jews, Christians, and others of all or even no faith—is to promote the idea that Israel’s sovereignty over Judea and Samaria, for so many reasons, is no less an option than any other. Moreover, it is better than an independent Arab state called Palestine.

Coming after the anti-Zionist and anti-Jewish social-media platformed onslaughts by the likes of anti-Israel, anti-Jewish podcasters and political commentators Tucker Carlson, Candace Owens and Nick Fuentes, among others, all of whom avow a form of Christian justification for their dark messaging, it shows that there is yet hope.

John Munayer, among others, including Naim Ateek, Mitri Raheb, Munther Isaac (a guest on Carlson’s show), Salim Munayer and Rula Khoury Mansou, has been promoting a Christian faith, “Palestinian theology.” That approach accepts the religious-based reality of some nationalisms, and if it is appropriate to think of “Palestinians” in that matter, then it cannot be denied for the Jews.

In a mid-November discussion, I caught some revealing elements

that should alert honest Christians that this approach to politics is wrong. For example, right at the start, he says, “Palestinians, whether they be Christian or Muslim.”

They cannot be Jewish? Is that a simple discrimination position, or is he intimating that Judaism is the problem? After all, God’s covenant with the Jews not only created a faith community with rituals and practices of a religious nature, but also imbued the Land of Israel with special sacredness.

Explaining the new generation of “Palestine” theologians (I admit, I do not know how one becomes a theologian), he says his goal in his new book is “to engage with people who care about justice and human rights for Palestinians ... and how can we be better witnesses to the gospel.”

As I am not Christian, I am aware I should be wary of treading into philosophizing about another religion. Nevertheless, the Gospels is a body of work that anyone can read. In the New Testament, “Palestine” is never mentioned. The “Land of Israel,” however, is. “Judea” is. “Samaria” is. The “Temple” in Jerusalem is mentioned. So, when contemporary Palestinians talk about “Palestine,” the “West Bank” and “Jews storming Al-Aqsa” to conduct “Talmudic rituals” (rituals that Jesus performed), what witnessing is being done? Are they referring to the same Bible? Or are they faking and engaged in a grand hoax?

Moreover, it’s not only Jews who are confronted by this Palestinianism that has overtaken the masses. The situation of Christians in the area of the current Palestinian Authority and, indeed, throughout most of the Middle East, is sorrowful, to say the least. Christians are persecuted, killed and starved by Islamic forces and too many Arab countries.

And not solely in the Middle East: Christmas fairs and churches throughout Europe have been objects of both murderous terror attacks and, literally, assaults on altars and other sacred objects.

We Jewish and Christian Zionists should be satisfied with Vice President JD Vance finally stating forthrightly that “we should be firm in saying antisemitism and racism is wrong.” Yet it was disheartening that his invitation to celebrate Chanukah with him did not deserve its own Jewish-themed card and carried a Golden Noel logo on a green background at the top. All the wrong colors and phrasing.

There is much that has been accomplished since Thomas Brightman published “Shall They Return to Jerusalem Again?” in 1615 and founded the Restorationist stream of Christian pro-Zionism. There is much to be confronted. There is much to be achieved in Judea and Samaria.

Fellow Zionists, onward! (JNS Dec 8)

Netanyahu-Trump Meeting to Focus on Hamas Disarmament

By Ariel Kahana and Danny Zaken

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is preparing for his sixth meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump, scheduled for Dec. 29 at Trump’s Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida, a timing shaped by America’s year-end holiday season.

Trump intends to announce Phase 2 of his 20-point Gaza peace plan within days, despite Hamas’s ongoing refusal to return the body of Israel Police Master Sgt. Ran Gvili, who was killed defending Kibbutz Alumim during the Oct. 7, 2023, massacre. The original framework required the Palestinian terror organization to return all captives within 72 hours before moving to Phase 2.

Israeli officials hope Trump will delay the declaration until Gvili is recovered, though even a formal announcement of Phase 2 would remain operationally ambiguous.

The core problem is that not a single country has volunteered troops to fight Hamas. Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov said Monday that his government still lacks answers to basic questions about the proposed force’s mandate, “rendering any decision on Azerbaijani military participation premature.”

A day earlier, Netanyahu said any international force likely cannot

carry out its core mission of stripping Hamas of its weapons. In light of that, diplomatic officials expect Gaza’s demilitarization to dominate the Trump–Netanyahu discussions.

Beyond Gaza, the two leaders are expected to map out responses to a range of diplomatic and security challenges. Chief among them are Iran’s renewed weapons programs, Hezbollah’s continued armament and possible security arrangements in Syria.

Regarding the final captive, Gvili, there has been no progress. A sweep in Gaza City’s Zeitoun neighborhood yielded no findings. Israel Hayom reported that the Gvili family confronted U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Mike Waltz on Monday, urging Washington to halt any move toward Phase 2 until their son is recovered.

Coordinator of Hostages and Missing Persons Brig. Gen. (Res.) Gal Hirsch briefed Waltz on the operational situation and ongoing retrieval efforts. The U.S. ambassador conveyed America’s commitment and his own dedication to completing the mission and ensuring the police officer receives a dignified burial in Israel, but he stopped short of pledging a delay to Phase 2. (Israel Hayom Dec 9)

Dana International’s Tone-Deaf Defense of Israel

By Ruthie Blum

Much of the Jewish state and its social-media cheerleaders in the Diaspora have been tripping over themselves to crown Dana International the new Golda Meir. The way people are gushing over her latest Instagram posts, you’d think the transgender Eurovision legend, who won in 1998 with “Viva La Diva,” had just displayed unprecedented patriotism.

After the Netherlands, Spain, Ireland and Slovenia announced they were pulling out of the 2026 Eurovision Song Contest—because the organizers decided to allow Israel to compete despite the controversy surrounding the war in Gaza—she wrote, in English: “I have performed in your countries numerous times ... I was always welcomed with warmth and love, and you ... connect[ed] to the message I brought with me: a message of equality, acceptance, human dignity and the basic rights of every person.”

She went on, “You know, Israel is the only country in our region that is this liberal. Tel Aviv Pride parade is one of the largest in the world. We are also the Holy Land, the land of the Bible—whose capital, Jerusalem, holds the holiest sites of the three monotheistic religions, and draws people from all around the world to pray. But we are also the land of Tel Aviv, of beaches ... and of epic parties. Beyond that, we’ve been part of the Eurovision Song Contest for many years. We try our best in the competition, and sometimes we even succeed.”

She continued with weepy earnestness, “So, explain to me how and why you have turned against us and announced your withdrawal? You no longer want us singing with you? Do you understand how violent and insulting that decision is? How much it adds only hatred and harm?”

So far, so good. Sort of. Though begging enemies for their affection and appreciation is as tiresome as it is futile.

Of course, no such appeal from a celebrity would be complete without a wink to those foes. Don’t worry, she assured, “A large part of the people in Israel do not agree with our government. They want a different government. You don’t punish an entire country because you disagree politically with its government. The unbearable war that went on far too long has ended. It is legitimate to criticize it and to resent how long it lasted.”

Uh, sorry, no.

Luckily she mentioned that “Israel is a country fighting for its existence, trying to balance security challenges with sanity and liberal values, things that are not well accepted in the region we live in.”

Indeed, she added, “Hamas executes people for being gay. Almost every Eurovision winner would have been hanged in the town square in Gaza.”

Quick to resume her attempt at finding common ground with

those who accuse Israel of wrongdoing, she stressed, “That doesn’t justify anything, and of course we must fight for peace and reconciliation with all human beings. ... a withdrawal from Eurovision harms the very idea of peace, harms Israel and harms the contest itself. I believe this decision will be reversed, and that we will all celebrate together at Eurovision with this message of equality, love and acceptance, and with the music that brings people together. Because that is what Eurovision is truly about.”

With defenders like Dana, who needs critics?

Hey, but let’s give credit where it’s due to the performer for presenting an unvarnished version of the above, “between us, in Hebrew, which only we understand.” You know, among likeminded Israelis who think Israel is at fault for garnering negative attention.

“I am shocked ... and deeply pained by the situation,” she began. “How did we reach the point where even in Eurovision, a European song competition that always accepted us with a big hug and included us in the campy celebration and the Good Evening, Europe!—even though, oops, we’re not Europe—how is it that the attitude toward us has changed?”

After all, she argued, “The archaic approach that used to belittle this competition has nearly vanished. ... Eurovision once again became glamorous and influential, and we understood that it is one of the only stages that allows Israel to show a different side from the one in which we star in the news, [that] on the musical front we’re doing fine—not only in wars.”

She proceeded to ask: “How did we get here? How did the place that loved us so much and embraced us become hostile? ... How is it that we lost the battle of hasbara [public diplomacy]? ... How did we become one of the most hated countries in the world?”

Her answers were as awful and telling as her questions.

“It’s too easy to explain this with antisemitism or hatred of Israel, because historically, the attitude toward Israel was different,” she stated. “After the Six-Day War, we were seen as a brave, strong and beloved ... During the Oslo process, the world embraced the country striving for peace. And now? The world no longer sees liberal Israel, the high-tech nation, Tel Aviv, the beach-and-tourism city that embraces and welcomes everyone. ... Since my Eurovision victory, I’ve been telling the world about the liberal and beautiful Israel. I’ve happily collaborated with the Foreign Ministry and embassies around the world in public-diplomacy activities, in videos. I truly love Israel; it is the country that made my dream of becoming a successful singer come true. It is my beloved home. I am proud of Israel—in every language.”

Great. Should we give her a medal of valor for daring to diverge from so many of her fellow “artists” at home and abroad?

Not so fast. In case anyone in her milieu doubted the correctness of her politics, she set him/her (no pun intended) straight.

“But hey,” she said, “something went wrong in how the world views us, and we need to acknowledge that and do everything to change it. Whoever wants [National Security Minister Itamar] Ben-Gvir, [Finance Minister Bezale] Smotrich, the ‘full, full right’ and a never-ending war should understand that this is the price—that this is a path that leads to the vision of ‘a nation that dwells alone.’ And whoever wants us to return to being the Israel that the world loved should raise their voice.”

In other words, Dana International blames Israeli leaders and members of the public who elected them for European lies, not the moral rot of the Continent. And she longs for the days of the Oslo Accords, a direct line—albeit distant—to the atrocities of Oct. 7, 2023.

That the “anybody but Bibi Netanyahu” protest movement is pleased with her pontification makes perfect sense. The problem is with the fawning followers who aren’t anti-government activists.

Either they don’t know how to read or they prefer cherry-picking the palatable parts, grateful for any morsel of praise for Israel from a homegrown celebrity. It’s as pathetic as the majority of Eurovision entries. (JNS Dec 7)

Israel can Ease Tensions with Qatar, But Only if Doha Stops Supporting Hamas

By Noa Lazimi

A trilateral meeting of the United States, Israel, and Qatar was held Sunday as part of an American initiative to jumpstart a process aimed at easing tensions between Doha and Jerusalem, against the backdrop of efforts to advance Phase B of President Donald Trump’s plan for Gaza. The meeting was attended by US Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff, Mossad director David Barnea, and a senior Qatari official.

Following Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s apology in September, Qatar is seeking to solidify its image as a constructive mediator and launder its reputation despite its ongoing support for terrorism. This comes amid statements from Doha declaring that “Qatar will not take part in funding the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip,” arguing that “we will not sign the checks that rebuild what someone else destroyed.”

Beyond strengthening their already elevated international standing – bolstered significantly by their central role in Trump’s “points plan” – the Qataris are keen to further tighten their ties with Washington, which grants them extensive security benefits, including a defense agreement anchored in a presidential order.

If the process of rapprochement progresses and such meetings continue, Israel must make it clear that any advancement depends on concrete steps from Doha. Every move toward improved relations with Qatar must be conditioned on the cessation of all support for Hamas – direct or indirect – and on a complete halt to any promotion of interests aligned with the organization’s goals. Only under these terms can Israel ensure that any emerging diplomatic dynamic serves its strategic interests rather than granting further legitimacy to actions that endanger it and destabilize the region.

It is important to recognize that behind the scenes, Qatar – together with Turkey – continues to shape developments in the Gaza arena. The close ties maintained by Doha and Ankara with Hamas serve their own strategic interests, granting them channels of influence and leverage.

Israel should be concerned by attempts from both countries to engineer mechanisms that would hollow out the very idea of disarming Hamas, as reflected in several recently published initiatives, including proposals to store the organization’s weapons rather than dismantle them.

Under current conditions, Israel should seize the momentum created by ongoing legal efforts in the US to outlaw the Muslim Brotherhood – currently limited to Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt – and work with Washington to extend such designations to the organization’s branches in Qatar and Turkey.

In addition, the United States could require the Qatari government to take legal action against entities operating on its soil that are involved in funding organizations already designated by the US as terrorist groups. Qatar must also commit to ending anti-Israel propaganda on its Al Jazeera media network and cease providing a safe haven to senior Hamas operatives who continue to reside there.

Regarding Gaza, Israel should work to curb Qatar’s attempts to expand its footprint in the Gaza Strip under the guise of humanitarian projects, which risk functioning as a civilian façade for Hamas’s governing mechanisms. Furthermore, Jerusalem should firmly oppose any “soft” model – promoted by Doha and Ankara – of disabling or placing out of use (decommissioning) Hamas weaponry, such as transferring arms to the Palestinian Authority or storing them under supervision.

Instead, Israel must insist on the complete and total dismantling of Hamas’s military capabilities (disarmament). In close coordination with the United States, Israel must make clear to Qatar and Turkey that it will not permit any arrangement – direct or indirect – that enables Hamas to remain standing. (Jerusalem Post Dec 10)