

THE WEEKLY PRINT

Campus safety now a top priority for Jewish students choosing colleges; Israel learns the hard way that Russia, China are not its friends; Former Israeli national security advisor: 'Israel doesn't have the time it thinks it has to fight this war'; Former Rangers second baseman Ian Kinsler rallies support for Israel; Youngest House Democratic recruits speak out for Israel; Mayorkas and Wray warn of significant increase in antisemitic homeland threats; Biden administration pledges plan to combat rising antisemitism on campuses within 2 weeks; Virginia's attorney general launches investigation into pro-Hamas campus group; Hundreds gather to mark 3rd anniversary of Rabbi Sacks' death, consider how religion can 'heal a fractured world'; and Aramco CEO calls for 'international standards' on AI.

NOVEMBER 1, 2023

Campus safety now a top priority for Jewish students choosing colleges

As early decision applications are due, high school students are factoring in which schools are speaking out against anti-Jewish hate

By Gabby Deutch

For ambitious high school seniors, Nov. 1 looms large every year. That's the day that most early-decision applications are due, and a student can only apply to one university. If they get in, they are bound to attend. It's one of the most important, and most stressful, decisions they will make.

Rachel Tulman, a senior at Scheck Hillel Community School in Miami, has had Nov. 1 marked on her calendar for months. She worked hard for the last three years so that she could apply early to an Ivy League university. Now, that won't be happening.

"I was going to ED [early decision] to Cornell or UPenn. But then I went to visit the UPenn campus, and I saw people ripping down the missing hostages posters," said Tulman. "I just couldn't bind myself [to the University of Pennsylvania]." It was a difficult and disappointing decision for Tulman.

An unprecedented wave of antisemitism has swelled over the past three weeks, beginning after Hamas' Oct. 7 terrorist attacks in Israel. Campuses have seen professors praising the Hamas attack, physical assaults on Jewish students and equivocation by university administrators. Over the weekend, the kosher dining hall at Cornell was put on lockdown after detailed, murderous threats were made against Cornell Jewish students.

Tulman is one of many Jewish American high school seniors who are now confronted with a startling rise in antisemitism on college campuses at exactly the time that they must decide which university to attend for the next four years. Jewish parents and their high school-aged children are grappling with a new set of considerations as they make what is already a weighty decision: Will this school be safe for my

child?

"It's probably one of the biggest things that we're looking into," said Heather Zeaman, whose daughter is a high school senior in Chalfont, Pa., a far suburb of Philadelphia. The recent antisemitic incident at Cornell led her daughter to decide not to apply to a program at Ithaca College, which is located in the same city as Cornell, for fear that the threats might spread.

Most students applying to colleges do not submit early decision applications, and they won't have to make their final choice about where they will enroll until the spring. Still, recent events have already had an impact on their decisions about where to apply. Some parents are setting red lines.

Dan Broskol has told his son, a high school senior, that he cannot apply to Tulane, in New Orleans, after three Jewish students were attacked last week when they

were counter-protesting a pro-Palestine rally.

"I wouldn't want to spend my money to pay for my kid to go to school, and make that investment in the place where I feel like he wouldn't be comfortable being Jewish in a way that I would want him to be, and he probably wants to be also," said Brosgol, who is the executive director of a synagogue in Wayland, Mass. "Rankings be damned, I want a place where he's going to be safe."

It's a tricky calculus for parents and students, particularly because Tulane and some of the other recent hotspots of campus antisemitism like Columbia, the University of Michigan and Harvard have sizable Jewish populations. Many of those schools have seen Jewish students come together in recent weeks for pro-Israel vigils and rallies, in addition to large Shabbat dinners and other Jewish programming.

Many Jewish parents are hyper-focused on the issue. A private Facebook group called "Mothers Against College Antisemitism" has more than 38,000 members less than a week after it was created. All day long, parents post news stories and video clips about antisemitic incidents on their children's campuses. The parents of several high school seniors told *Jewish Insider* they've been scouring the page for news about the schools their kids are considering.

"It seems like every Jewish parent, no matter affiliated, not especially affiliated, Orthodox, Conservative, Reform — they're all very passionate about how horrible this all is, and how strongly they feel that these campuses are not safe for their kids," said Shoshanna Shechter, whose daughter is a high school senior at the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School in Maryland.

Naomi Steinberg, a college counselor in Boca Raton, Fla., who primarily works with Jewish teens, cautioned parents "to be very careful of knee-jerk reactions, like, 'I'm not going to apply to Cornell.' I think that that's not necessarily a deeply thoughtful way to guide your child," said Steinberg.

"I understand why they're frightened," added Steinberg, who instead urged students and parents to take a holistic look at what's happening at the universities in which they are interested, including what kind of support administrators are providing to Jewish students and how

current Jewish students are handling the ongoing events. "Really understanding how universities are responding is going to tell you a much, much more compelling story than reacting the next day after a horrific incident on campus," she explained.

For Claudia Granville, a Boston-based real estate agent who has twins applying to college, the response from university administrators is the most important consideration for her.

"We are not looking at the Hillels and the Jewish houses on campus. We're looking at the administration and the leadership and how they respond," said Granville. Her son applied early to the University of Miami, which strongly condemned the Hamas attacks.

A key concern for some Jewish parents and students are the essays that are a required part of most college applications. One popular prompt on the Common Application, which is accepted by more than 1,000 universities, asks applicants to write about a "background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it." Jewish students now wonder whether writing about their connection to Israel or to Judaism will hinder their odds of getting into that school.

"My college counselor told me, If I get an admissions officer that disagrees with what I'm saying, I'm not gonna get in," said Tulman. "I just told her, If I don't get accepted because of that, then that's not somewhere I want to be."

One senior recently asked Laura Hosid, a private college counselor in Montgomery County, Md., whether to change an essay where they wrote about a summer internship in Tel Aviv.

"My answer differs depending on whether it is an essay about Israel or an essay just about being Jewish," Hosid said. "If you have to hide that you're Jewish, then that's probably not the right thing for you. With Israel, I think it is trickier."

The University of Miami and the University of Florida were mentioned frequently as good options — strong academics, and strong university responses to the terror attack and to antisemitism. Tulman said those are now her top two choices.

But others pointed out that antisemitism isn't the only concern for Jewish students.

"She just is not very happy with the politics that are going on in Florida, and she can't see herself being in a Florida school," Zeaman, the mom in Chalfont, Pa., said of her daughter. Hosid noted that the only other time she had seen current events play such a large role in students' decisions about where to apply for college was last year, after *Roe v. Wade* was overturned, when girls considered abortion access.

"[Florida had] the strongest statement that came out early, so everyone's like, 'Oh, Florida, Florida,' except that we don't want to go Florida for other reasons," said Hosid.

Brosgol, the Wayland, Mass., parent, noted that a family friend who goes to Bates College, a liberal arts school in Lewiston, Maine, spent two days locked down in their dorm room last week while the perpetrator of a mass shooting that had killed 18 people remained on the loose. It raises a larger question that all parents — Jewish and otherwise — must grapple with when their children leave home for the first time. Even places that seem safe can have that sense of calm shattered in an instant.

"What's actually safe, and how do you make the calculation of, like, What are you encouraging your kids to do when you can't manage them and protect them?" Brosgol asked. "For every parent, it's a really difficult conversation." ♦

Israel learns the hard way that Russia, China are not its friends

Former Trump deputy assistant secretary of state: 'When you're down, you find out who your true friends are. Democracies are standing by Israel's side. Autocracies are supporting Israel's enemies'

By Lahav Harkov

When Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, Israel found itself in a diplomatically delicate situation: It opposed the invasion and naturally sided with the West, but needed Russia's support to be able to strike Iranian proxies in the Middle East. Israel pulled its punches against Russian President Vladimir Putin's belligerence, providing humanitarian, but not military, aid to Ukraine, which drew criticism in the U.S.

In the risky world of realpolitik, Israel has also deepened its economic ties with China, reaping huge investments from the Chinese. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's plan to visit Beijing this year was seen as a message to President Joe Biden, who at the time had not yet invited him to Washington.

If the Netanyahu government calculated that the strategic outreach to Russia and China — even in the face of consternation from allies — would bear diplomatic fruit when Israel needed it, the countries' reactions to Oct. 7 proved to be a cold slap in the face. In the wake of Hamas' terror rampage, in fact, Israel's relations with Beijing and Moscow have worsened.

As Len Khodorkovsky, a deputy assistant secretary of state in the Trump administration who dealt with Iran sanctions and issues relating to China, put it: "Israel tried to have it both ways: reap the benefits of its friendships with the U.S. and the West while flirting with Russia and China."

"But when you're down, you find out who your true friends are. Democracies are standing by Israel's side. Autocracies are supporting Israel's enemies," Khodorkovsky said.

Israel's close alliance with the U.S., and the West more broadly, has proven its worth in recent weeks, with American aid arriving in Israel and aircraft carriers in the region, plus a long list of Western leaders visiting Israel to demonstrate solidarity. They have been treating the Jewish state like the new Ukraine, a symbol of Western unity and determination, and affirming that Israel is a close ally.

Not so Russia and China.

Following the Hamas massacre, Putin blamed "the failure of United States policy in the Middle East." The Chinese Communist Party-affiliated *Global Times* accused the West and the U.S. of "fanning the flames" and "creat[ing] substantial obstacles to crisis resolution."

Their anti-American and anti-Western stances came with an accusatory posture towards Israel while excusing, ignoring and even exculpating Hamas' actions.

A day after Hamas perpetrated the worst atrocities committed against the Jewish people since the Holocaust, China's Foreign Ministry had nothing to say on the matter in its statement "on the escalation of tensions between Palestine and Israel." Beijing only expressed concern about "escalations of tension and violence," called on "relevant parties to remain calm...[and] protect civilians" and advance a two-state solution.

Nearly two weeks later, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said Israel's response to the massacre went "beyond the scope of self-defense," characterizing it as "collective punishment." On the same day, a *Bloomberg* reporter asked China Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning why Beijing had yet to even say the word Hamas, let alone its attack on Israel, and in her response, she

continued to avoid mentioning Hamas or its massacre.

China and Russia vetoed an American-proposed resolution in the U.N. Security Council to condemn Hamas last week while avoiding naming the terrorist organization. This time, Beijing did call for "the early release of hostages," but said Israel was engaging in "indiscriminate and asymmetrical use of force" and continued to accuse Israel of attacking the Al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza, without evidence.

Meanwhile, antisemitic messages abound on the otherwise heavily censored Chinese social media, portraying Israel as bloodthirsty and American Jews as having too much wealth and influence in the U.S., and Israel disappeared from the maps on major Chinese websites, raising questions about the messages China's leadership is tacitly approving.

In Russia, the messaging was much less tacit. Within days of Hamas murdering over 1,000 Israelis and abducting over 230, Putin compared the Jewish state's actions to those of Nazi Germany, saying that the Israeli naval blockade on Gaza was like the siege of Leningrad. Putin and Netanyahu, who were frequently in contact in the prime minister's previous terms in office, only spoke a few days later, on Oct. 17.

Last week, a Hamas delegation led by Moussa Abu Marzouk visited Moscow to meet with Mikhail Bogdanov, Russia's deputy foreign minister for the Middle East. Hamas praised Putin's position on the war following the meeting.

Then, on Sunday, a mob in Dagestan, in southern Russia, raided an airport where a plane from Tel Aviv had landed, chanting calls to massacre Jews with seemingly

minimal effort from the authorities to stop the potential lynch mob.

"We respond in the diplomatic world to offenses in the diplomatic world," a diplomatic source involved in formulating some of Israel's responses told *Jewish Insider*.

The Israeli Foreign Ministry summoned Russian Ambassador to Israel Anatoly Victorov for a reprimand over Russia hosting Hamas leaders. Deputy Director-General for Eurasia Simona Halperin also said that Israel views with severity the "lack of a one-sided and clear condemnation of the terrorist group Hamas from Moscow." Russia's behavior, she said according to a Foreign Ministry statement, "sends a message of legitimizing terror against Israelis." The reprimand followed an earlier statement from Jerusalem on the Hamas visit to Moscow.

The Atlantic Council's Ksenia Svetlova, a senior research nonresident fellow at the Washington, D.C.-based think tank, told *JI* that Israel's attempt to "satisfy both sides" during the Ukraine war was a failure.

It should be "totally clear that Israel and Russia are in totally different blocs," she said, with Russia forming a bloc of "rejects" with Iran, North Korea and Belarus, as well as close ties with Hezbollah and Hamas.

Hamas is not on Russia's list of terrorist organizations and there have been close relations between them since 2006. As such, Svetlova said, "Don't be surprised that they watched the terrible massacre and refused to condemn it."

In addition, Russian officers fought alongside Hezbollah terrorists in Syria.

"What did we think, that the coordination would stop?" Svetlova said.

When it comes to the current war with Hamas, Israel is "very disappointed" and sent "sharp messages" to Moscow in public and through diplomatic channels, the diplomatic source said.

"We expect Russia, a country that has dealt with terrorism, to recognize Israel's right to defend itself in a war with a terrorist organization that must be totally erased and lose its governing and military capabilities. Hamas is not a partner for dialogue. This message was sent very clearly to Russia," she said.

As for any attempt by Russia to mediate

an agreement to release any of the 238 hostages held by Hamas in Gaza, the diplomatic source said that "in light of Russia's stances at the moment it doesn't look like they have a place and a constructive role."

Though Russia is proud of having relations with all sides in the Middle East, it is not taking part in mediating a hostage deal or trying to bring calm over Israel's northern border, Svetlova pointed out.

"Everything is more extreme because of the Ukraine war. Russia can't even [mediate] if they wanted to, because there is a clear division into blocs," she argued.

The interests in Moscow and Jerusalem in relation to the war are counter to each other, Svetlova said.

"Russia wants less American influence and we [Israelis] need as much American influence as possible — it's a matter of survival for us," Svetlova said. "There are people in the [Russian] Foreign Ministry who understand what is happening...but it's irrelevant because their broader interest is to send a clear message to everyone who opposes America in the region... Instead, they play the anti-American card and say 'We are more balanced because we are not afraid to accuse Israel of war crimes.' Their goal is to push America out of the Middle East. Their interest is for everything to be on fire."

The diplomatic source viewed the war and the anti-Israel demonstrations around the world as bringing Israel and its allies closer together. They are "a wake-up call to some of the leadership in the West...that Palestinian terror threatens their way of life, the life of liberal, Western democracies." She pointed to European governments banning pro-Palestinian protests and threatening to deport migrants.

Many residents of Sderot, however, have "Israel is part of the Western, democratic, liberal world," the diplomatic source insisted. "It is important to say that our values, being part of the Western camp, cannot be in doubt."

The Israeli Embassy in Beijing spoke out publicly against China's position repeatedly since the war began, including on Sunday, in a post on X (formerly Twitter). "We expect China to officially voice out in its official briefings, that Hamas is a

terrorist organization that committed a brutal massacre of innocent civilians on October 7th and should therefore be harshly condemned. China, as an important player in the global scene and a permanent member of the security council, should do all it can to secure the safe and unconditional return of the 230 hostages, and to prevent the escalation of tension in the region. We trust that China supports Israel's legitimate right, to provide full security to its citizens and to defend its territorial integrity when unilaterally attacked."

Carice Witte, executive director of SIGNAL Group, an Israeli policy and organization specializing in China-Israel affairs, lamented to *JI* that experts are not formulating Jerusalem's policy towards Beijing.

"Without understanding China's thinking, it is impossible to deal with it effectively," she said. "We now see that in neon lights with the way China is addressing this issue."

"Israel has shied away from formulating an official policy on China. Something as narrow as economic growth is not really a policy. Everyone wants good economic development with China, even America."

Yet, it's not only Israel that does not understand China; Witte said there is a "deep-seated misunderstanding by the policy makers" in Beijing about the current conflict.

"Their policy is pro-Palestinian, but you can do that without supporting Hamas. There is a real lack of understanding of what Hamas is...Hamas would be anathema to China and the Chinese people. They do not endorse such behavior," she said.

Witte cited Saudi and other investments in China, saying that "as far as they're concerned, the support of Arab countries help with their own domestic challenges."

However, Witte said, "There seems to be a lack of awareness in China that Hamas is not welcomed by all of the Arab countries. If China wants the support of Arab countries, it should differentiate between Palestinians and Hamas instead of just calling them all Palestinians."

Witte cited an article by one of China's top Middle East experts, Professor Wu Bingbing of Peking University, as a reflection of Beijing's thinking. Beijing seeks a "new

security architecture for the Middle East, which seeks to involve all actors in the region, including Hamas, Hezbollah and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad,” he wrote. Bingbing blames Israel for “marginalizing” the Palestinian issue, leading the international community to neglect it “at a time when tensions were so evidently rising.” The Abraham Accords, he argued, “fueled the conflict further.”

The core of China’s policy in the Middle East is great-power rivalry with the U.S., Witte said. If Operation Swords of Iron results in the scuttling of Saudi-Israel normalization, that would be a positive for Beijing, because it wants America out of the Middle East, leaving a vacuum that China could fill.

“China is beyond aware that Israel is on America’s side,” she said. “If anyone had

any doubt, they can look at the two aircraft carriers.”

Looking ahead, Witte pointed out that China is set to hold the U.N. Security Council presidency starting on Nov. 1.

“Unless the Israeli government takes action, it is very possible that things will get even more problematic. If nothing else, the fires of antisemitism in the Chinese population will be fanned,” she warned. ♦

NOVEMBER 2, 2023

Former Israeli national security advisor: ‘Israel doesn’t have the time it thinks it has to fight this war’

Eyal Hulata explains why humanitarian aid for Gaza is in Israel’s interests and why Iran pushed the Houthis to attack Israel

By Lahav Harkov

Twenty-six days into Israel’s war with Hamas, it remains unclear how thousands of terrorists were able to infiltrate Israel and attack for hours without being stopped by the IDF. Equally unclear are the parameters of the Israel-Hamas war: Will the fighting be contained to Gaza, or will another front open in Israel’s north?

With hundreds of thousands of Palestinians displaced after Israel warned civilians to leave the warzone in the northern Gaza Strip, the humanitarian situation has become an international concern, with pressure growing on Israel as a result.

Eyal Hulata, Israel’s national security advisor until January who is now based in the U.S., spoke with *Jewish Insider* this week to provide some clarity and suggestions as to what Israel should do moving forward. His remarks have been edited for clarity and length.

Jewish Insider: You were national security adviser under Prime Ministers Naftali Bennett and Yair Lapid. Do you think their governments were prepared for the possibility of a terrorist invasion?

Eyal Hulata: We discussed scenarios of a surprise attack by Hamas, but I don’t

remember discussing something of such a magnitude. The possibility that Hamas would surprise us and try to take soldiers and civilians hostage was always something we considered. We knew Hamas is an opportunistic organization and that it would try to find opportunities to [take hostages]. But I don’t remember warnings about such a broad event.

Jl: There are reports that Hamas planned the attack for years. How did Israel and its vaunted intelligence services miss those threats?

EH: It was a very, very successful campaign of deceit. They understood our methods of gathering intelligence better than we realized. They knew how to feed us information that made us think everything was business as usual. In addition, very few people [in Hamas] knew the whole picture.

Unfortunately, our intelligence system waited for concrete information before giving warnings. We fell into their trap.

But there was a bigger problem. The whole defense system was supposed to prepare for surprises and be prepared to defend our citizens, even if the intelligence doesn’t say what will happen, and that

didn’t happen for many reasons. And that is the responsibility of the political level. The security cabinet is supposed to be prepared not only based on intelligence but in weighing all of the ways of understanding what is happening.

We went into [Simchat Torah] with insufficient forces spread out, not only for this scenario. The Re’im Base [the IDF’s Gaza Division headquarters] was conquered. They were not ready for a surprise attack. That is the big problem and that is the responsibility of the politicians.

Jl: How can we prevent it from happening again?

EH: First, we have to win this war. The goal that the prime minister set, of dismantling Hamas’s capability to rule the Strip, is a very big goal. It’s not clear to me that we can achieve it. I don’t think we have the time to finish the war that the Israeli system thinks we have.

We have to bring all the hostages home and bring back the public’s sense of security to the public. Two hundred thousand people will not go home if they don’t understand that something has changed to prevent this from happening again.

Hamas is still close to the fence. That is unbearable. We need a wide buffer zone to... prevent the smuggling of arms into Gaza, which we knew about, but no government dealt with sufficiently. Otherwise, we won't be able to bring back security to the residents.

Jl: What do you mean when you say Israel won't have the time it thinks it has?

EH: The pressure to end the ground part of the war will come faster than what we heard in last week's press conference [with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant and others, who said the war may take months].

[President Joe] Biden has been saying that the humanitarian situation disturbs him and we will hear it from other leaders. The demonstrations against Israel that are currently taking place can turn into demos against the governments in the capitals around the world, and when that happens, business as usual will not continue even if the leaders' hearts are in the right place...

The dynamic will end up being what we knew from the Second Lebanon War and Operation Protective Edge [in 2014]. There are other interests around us [aiming to bring the war to a close.]

Therefore, we need to go above and beyond to improve the humanitarian situation in southern Gaza. That is the only way to improve our situation with various governments, and we have to be aware of it.

Jl: In an interview with *The New York Times*, Bennett called to cut Gaza in half and choke off the north. What do you think of that idea?

EH: I think that's what's happening, but I don't think it's happening at enough of a magnitude. That's what Israel said in advance, that civilians must evacuate to the south of the Gaza River, and most of the military activity is in the northern strip – that's where the ground invasion is. We have de facto divided Gaza.

Now, we need to go above and beyond to make the humanitarian situation as good as possible. Even then time is not on our side. I think we only have a few weeks.

Jl: If we only have a few weeks, what should we do first?

EH: It is of supreme importance to take advantage of this time to free the hostages. It will be much harder to do after the war is over. The war cabinet is right that a ground invasion can push Hamas to free them, and we have to push hard.

We have to create a new security situation in Gaza. We have to create a demilitarized zone on the Gazan side of the fence, a clear strip that will be a new buffer zone that Israel will know how to protect, not necessarily with a physical presence, in the Gaza Strip.

We must follow Hamas's pressure points in northern Gaza to force them to change their policy. The insistence on not providing diesel fuel is the right thing to do, because that's what Hamas needs for its tunnels, electricity and ventilation. They're not lacking in diesel, they're just not giving it to civilian needs, like hospitals.

Jl: There are reports now of the US and Israel considering an international peacekeeping force in Gaza. Do you think that could work better than, say UNIFIL, which has not managed to keep Hezbollah from stockpiling missiles?

EH: I don't think there is a good precedent for an international force in our region that does its job.

But we have to look at the alternatives. I don't think the Palestinian Authority will be able to control Gaza in the near future, and I don't think Egypt will do it. If there is no force to ensure that terrorists don't take over, clearly they will.

Israel has to be concerned with the question of how we make sure Gaza stays stable. I don't know that we need to occupy it and do it ourselves. Some in Israel think that, but I don't.

I don't know about this specific offer, but it is clear to me that none of the scenarios sound good, yet we have to do something. To not have anyone in control means terrorists will take over again.

Jl: Do you think things will heat up with Hezbollah?

EH: It's complicated enough to meet our goals in Gaza. It'll be worse if we have to act in Lebanon.

I don't think Nasrallah is looking to do more now either, and not because he's deterred, but because of a cold calculation. He and Iran understand that if they go in now and we strike them hard like they know we will, Hezbollah won't be available when Iran needs them for other scenarios.

That's why we see the Houthi arena heat up. The Houthis joining is cheaper for Iran than Hezbollah. Israel can't strike Yemen like it did in Lebanon, so the price Iran pays in loss of assets is lower.

Jl: The U.S. is showing strong support for Israel, but some have argued that the Biden administration is also limiting Israel. What do you think?

EH: I don't see the U.S. limiting us. I see the U.S. asking questions that are appropriate for the government of Israel to ask itself, like how will this plan develop and what will happen the day after the war. For the U.S. to ask this isn't preposterous or problematic. Israel should have good plans. We don't see the U.S. limiting our ground operation. I don't think they really got in the way of Israeli decision-making.

I am very satisfied with the way the U.S. government is supporting Israel and giving us space to act. It's not unlimited, and I think that's reasonable.

I think U.S. has to ask itself how the things happening here influence their policies.

Biden said that other actors should not take advantage of this war, but we see that it's happening – apropos the Houthis, and strikes on Americans by Iranian proxies [in Iraq]. I don't want to tell the Americans what they need to do, but certainly, the U.S. is watching these things and needs to think about its own policies.

Jl: How do you assess the response from Abraham Accords countries? Is there still hope for Israel to normalize relations with Saudi Arabia?

EH: I think the responses are good considering the reality. We can't expect them

to totally support us, but I think that as time goes on, the responses of the UAE, Morocco and Bahrain are balanced. The Emirati minister to the U.N. condemned Hamas and was criticized in the Arab world, but she did it anyway.

I think we can see that they understand Israel's situation and understand that if Hamas did this in Israel, it would mean dangerous things about the Muslim Brotherhood in their countries and certainly pose a danger to their national security.

As for Saudi Arabia, I think it's very clear from all we see and hear that the Saudis would like very much to continue the process that happening before. They need an agreement with the U.S. and I don't think this changes their relation to Israel.

It's clear that a significant goal of this attack was to stop the normalization process, and Iran is reaping the benefit. That doesn't serve the Saudi interest, and I'm sure

they're thinking about what that means and what they need to do.

JJ: Egypt and Jordan's reactions were much more negative.

EH: The closer countries to us, Jordan and Egypt, had very problematic responses

For Queen Rania herself to say that Israel has no right to defend itself because it's an occupying force is unacceptable.

Egyptians should be more active. I'm glad we could get the injured and foreign nationals out of Gaza, but if they could do that, they could get our hostages out. Hamas threatens them too, and [Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-] Sisi knows this well. They can and must do more.

JJ: There don't seem to be any consequences for Qatar, Hamas's sponsor. Israel even thanked Qatar for

helping negotiate to release hostages. What do you think of that?

EH: Qatar is trying to avoid responsibility and the international community cannot accept it, certainly not the way they acted after [the Hamas massacre] happened. Their influence on Hamas is very big and they haven't used it. If they want to pressure Hamas to free the hostages, they can.

I think the government of Israel needs to be more suspicious of Qatar's intentions and not to be impressed by their slick words and attempts to look like they're balanced. Qatar is responsible for strengthening Hamas and isn't fully using its influence to free hostages. I hope they will do it soon and I suggest not to be fooled by their attempt to present it as though they're balanced and have no responsibility. They are not balanced and they are responsible. ♦

OCTOBER 31, 2023

Former Rangers second baseman Ian Kinsler rallies support for Israel

Team Israel manager urges MLB fans to stand up against antisemitism, and to back Israel in its war against Hamas

By Frederic J. Frommer

When former Texas Rangers All-Star Ian Kinsler took the field to throw out the first pitch at the American League Championship Series game against the Houston Astros last week — 10 days after Hamas' deadly rampage in Israel — he looked fit and trim, like he could grab his cleats and glove and take up his old spot at second base.

But Kinsler wasn't wearing the Rangers uniform the home crowd was used to seeing him in for eight seasons, with its distinctive Old West lettering.

Instead, he had donned the blue pinstriped jersey of Team Israel (along with a Rangers cap), part of an effort Kinsler has joined to rally support for the Jewish state since the attack on Oct. 7.

"There's a lot of propaganda and there's a lot of backlash towards Israel by people that aren't really educated or don't really understand what the country actually does in the relationship with the Palestinian people," Kinsler, who manages Team Israel, told *Jewish Insider* last week. "So I'm trying to bring awareness to that situation and hopefully people look into it a little bit deeper than just reading the headlines. I find it bizarre that when Hamas puts out a statement, that people read it and it makes them think different things. I mean, this is a terrorist group that you're listening to."

The day after he threw out the first pitch, Kinsler appeared in a video along with 18 current and former Jewish major league players and coaches urging people to stand

up against antisemitism — and with Israel. They are the Jewish boys of summer in an anguished autumn of war.

The video begins with the words on the screen, "Following the attacks by Hamas on Oct. 7th, Jewish Major League Baseball players show their support for Israel." Kinsler and the other players and coaches then introduce themselves by name — some wearing Israeli jerseys or caps — then several of them individually say, "I am a Jew," before the entire group makes that declaration.

"For years, you have supported us on the field," says Zack Weiss, a pitcher with the Boston Red Sox. Then Astros star third baseman Alex Bregman says, "But now it's time to support all of us in standing up against antisemitism." The video ends with

the group collectively saying, “Stand up against antisemitism. Stand with Israel.” Besides Bregman and Kinsler, who is wearing his Team Israel jersey, the most recognizable names are former players Ryan Braun, Kevin Youkilis, Brad Ausmus and Shawn Green. It also features current Philadelphia Phillies catcher backup Garrett Stubbs.

Braun, nicknamed the “Hebrew Hammer,” played his entire career with the Milwaukee Brewers, and won the National League Most Valuable Player award in 2011. Youkilis played most of his career with the Red Sox, including the World Series champion 2004 and 2007 teams. Ausmus was a longtime catcher, before becoming manager of the Detroit Tigers for four seasons. Green was a star outfielder/first baseman, primarily with the Los Angeles Dodgers and Toronto Blue Jays. Some prominent baseball writers, such as Ken Rosenthal and Jon Morosi, have reposted the video.

The video was put together by Team Israel coach Nate Fish.

Kinsler, who played 14 seasons in the major leagues, mostly for the Rangers, who are playing the Arizona Diamondbacks in the World Series, recalled getting a group text from Fish asking the recipients to participate – and said the first player to

respond was Bregman. Fish gave the players a script to read so that he could put their voices together in the video. As of Saturday, it had been viewed by 1.3 million people on X (formerly Twitter), reposted 1,200 times and liked 3,500 times. As with anything on social media, the post has generated both positive and negative comments.

“I felt that it was a great idea to let people know that we all stand with Israel,” Kinsler said. “There’s a connection for every single one of those people on the video, and it was definitely an important thing to do.” He said he’s received mostly positive feedback.

Kinsler, who is special assistant to Rangers general manager Chris Young, said people in the team’s front office and coaching staff have approached him and asked if everything is OK.

Kinsler said he’s checked in on friends and baseball players in Israel to make sure they’re healthy and safe.

Earlier in the playoffs, when the Astros faced the Minnesota Twins in the American League Division Series, Bregman drew a Star of David on his baseball cap. In the other ALDS, the Baltimore Orioles sent dual Israeli-American citizen Dean Kremer to pitch Game 3 against the Rangers, just three days after the attacks.

Kremer, who played for Team Israel in this year’s World Baseball Classic, said

before the game, “Obviously, it’s a very sad situation. A lot of things are being brought to light. But everybody’s OK right now.” He added: “Is there a hesitation? No. I still want to pitch. But I mean, it’s going to be in the back of my head.”

Kremer wound up losing that game, giving up six runs in 1 2/3 innings, as the Rangers beat the Orioles, 7-1, to complete a three-game sweep.

Major League Baseball put out a statement after the attacks that read, “We are horrified by the acts of terrorism committed against the people of Israel that took so many lives. We mourn for all those who lost loved ones and pray for the wounded, their caretakers and those still searching for family and friends. We condemn these acts of hatred and violence and are heartbroken for the people of Israel.” MLB also held moments of silence throughout the playoffs.

The idea for Kinsler to wear the Israeli jersey for the first pitch came from his wife, Tess.

“I was asked by the Rangers to throw out the first pitch,” he said. “And that was something that I wanted to do. And my wife, her initial reaction was, ‘You should wear your Israeli jersey.’ And right when she said that, it 100 percent made sense.” ♦

NOVEMBER 2, 2023

Youngest House Democratic recruits speak out for Israel

The pro-Israel trio wrote a letter to Biden: ‘We stand behind your forceful condemnation of Hamas and your unwavering commitment to defending our ally Israel’

By Matthew Kassel

Three of the youngest Democrats now running for Congress are teaming up to voice their support for Israel and express their appreciation for President Joe Biden as he faces left-wing backlash over his staunch commitment to Israel in its escalating war with Hamas.

In a joint letter to Biden circulated on Tuesday, the three House candidates thanked the president for his leadership

amid the ongoing conflict, endorsing his efforts to secure additional security funding for Israel, push for humanitarian aid to Gaza and promote a two-state solution, among other things.

“At this time, we believe the United States must maintain moral clarity,” wrote Isaiah Martin of Texas, Joe Vogel of Maryland and Zak Malamed of New York, who are in their mid-to-late 20s. “We stand behind your

forceful condemnation of Hamas and your unwavering commitment to defending our ally Israel.”

The letter comes as recent polling has shown a stark generational divide over Israel, with Gen Z and millennial Democrats expressing greater skepticism of Israel’s counteroffensive in Gaza even amid an overall spike in Democratic support for the Jewish state in the wake of Hamas’ Oct. 7

terror attack.

But in a joint interview with *Jewish Insider* on Wednesday morning, the three Democrats — two Gen Zers and one millennial — pushed back on that narrative, insisting that such generational sentiments have not reflected their own personal engagement with primary voters this cycle.

“I’ve met with a bunch of students and folks who live here, and they were very upset that it seemed like younger voices were not speaking up,” said Martin, a 25-year-old Houston Democrat who is hoping to succeed Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX).

Even as he has drawn particularly fierce online criticism over his positions on Israel, Martin said it was “very clear that we needed to make sure we can stand up and say something on record to show that, in the face of what might be social media pressure, inside of our districts people have been extremely supportive.”

“A lot of folks who are looking at our generation are really concerned about what they’re seeing from the loudest young voices,” said Vogel, 26, a Jewish Democrat and Maryland state legislator running to replace Rep. David Trone (D-MD). “We felt very strongly that we had to send a clear message to our constituencies, to our generation and to the entire country that the current and future leaders of our generation are going to continue standing with Israel and are going to continue standing with the president.”

For his part, Malamed, a 29-year-old Jewish Democrat who is seeking to unseat embattled Rep. George Santos (R-NY) in one of the most heavily Jewish congressional districts in the country, claimed he would likely have faced blowback from voters if he had not issued a statement addressing the conflict.

“There wasn’t pressure to *not* release a statement,” he told *JL*. “There was pressure, in this district, to release a statement, to lead on this issue in the way that we have. I think it’s important to note that this stems from the desires and interests of those in our districts.”

The new letter underscores how the war between Israel and Hamas is emerging as a driving issue in multiple congressional races across the country. Last month, Eileen Filler-Corn, the former speaker of Virginia’s House,

launched a House campaign centered on her Jewish faith and support for Israel in the aftermath of Hamas’ assault. Meanwhile, several left-wing Squad members are now facing credible primary challenges over their positions on the war.

“This wasn’t a defining issue of my campaign, even in one of the most Jewish congressional districts, before the conflict was ignited,” Malamed said in the interview with *JL*. “Now it unquestionably is not just a defining issue — it is a top issue. A race that was previously going to be defined along the lines of where we stood on gun safety, abortion rights and health-care access now is one that will be defined on where we have stood on this issue — because it’s front and center on people’s minds.”

Vogel said the conflict has “become more and more of an issue” in his race, amid what he described as a growing intra-party divide over Middle East policy. “The impact of this locally has also been the surge in antisemitism we’re seeing in my own community here,” he added. “I can’t tell you the number of instances that I’ve dealt with in the last three weeks, even in my own apartment building where we had swastikas drawn in the lobby.”

While the predominant concern in Martin’s primary is what he characterized as “the direction of where the country is going when it comes to threats against democracy,” he said the issue is related to Biden’s approach to Israel.

“I do think that people in the district are very receptive and are caring about understanding where their candidate stands on the position the president has taken on this issue,” he told *JL*. “I’m proud of the position that we’ve taken, and I’m not going to be wavering off that because that’s exactly what the people want to see.”

Their statement, which also condemned antisemitism and Islamophobia, has faced some backlash from the left on social media. But Martin and his fellow signatories dismissed the criticism as shallow and out of step with broad voter sentiment.

“People are responding with a one-sentence tweet calling us ‘Zionazis’ or saying that we’re endorsing genocide — which is not only so far from the truth, it’s offensive,” Vogel said. “It also shows how we’re choosing to delve into the nuance and choosing to

have these dialogues, and in return we’re getting these three-word responses from folks who don’t actually want to engage on the issue.”

The online detractors “just want to be inflammatory in this moment,” claimed Malamed, arguing that “inflammatory rhetoric is not going to be what resolves the conflict.”

“I could care less than two pennies about what New York DSA has to say about this,” added Martin, referring to the Democratic Socialists of America, which has faced widespread backlash for endorsing a pro-Hamas rally in Times Square last month. “I know that the people of this district are very supportive of a very complex discussion on this issue.”

Their sentiments were affirmed on Wednesday by Rep. Ritchie Torres (D-NY), a 35-year-old pro-Israel Democrat who has frequently sparred with the left as the conflict in Gaza has continued to escalate.

“The notion that young people are monolithically anti-Israel is a fiction,” he wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter, praising the “millennials and members of Gen Z” who “want nothing to do with the DSA and who understand that there’s nothing remotely progressive about justifying or glorifying the barbarism and terrorism of Hamas.”

In the interview with *JL*, Vogel framed their approach as part of an ongoing battle for the “soul” of the Democratic Party.

“We have a strong team here and we’re going to continue working hard in this fight,” he said. “And I think that, ultimately, we will be successful in this battle for the soul of our party and make sure that the Democratic Party continues standing with Israel.” ♦

Mayorkas and Wray warn of significant increase in antisemitic homeland threats

Hamas' attack could 'serve as an inspiration [for terrorism] the likes of which we haven't seen since ISIS launched its so-called caliphate several years ago' FBI Director Christopher Wray warned

By Marc Rod

Top homeland security officials told lawmakers on Tuesday that the Oct. 7 Hamas attacks on Israel have increased the threat of terror attacks against Americans at home, with the threat to the Jewish community rising to “historic levels.”

“The Jewish community is targeted by terrorists really across the spectrum: homegrown violent extremists, foreign terrorist organizations, both Sunni and Shia, domestic violent extremists,” FBI Director Christopher Wray said in testimony to the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. “And when you look at a group that makes up 2.4%, roughly, of the American population, it should be jarring for everyone that that same population accounts for something like 60% of all religious-based hate crimes, and so they need our help.”

Wray noted that since Oct. 7, foreign terrorist organizations like Al Qaeda and ISIS specifically called for attacks against the U.S. Jewish community. He predicted that the Oct. 7 attack would “serve as an inspiration [for terrorism] the likes of which we haven't seen since ISIS launched its so-called caliphate several years ago.”

He said that the FBI has seen a series of threats in the U.S., that it had already intercepted a synagogue bombing plot in Houston, that Iran has an ongoing pattern of attempted operations on U.S. soil and that the FBI is investigating individuals affiliated with Hamas.

“Our most immediate concern is that violent extremists, individuals or small groups will draw inspiration from the events in the Middle East to carry out attacks against Americans. That includes not just homegrown extremists inspired

by a foreign terrorist organization, but also domestic extremists targeting Jewish or Muslim communities,” Wray said. “We also cannot and do not discount the possibility that Hamas or another foreign terrorist organization may exploit the current conflict to conduct attacks here on our own soil.”

Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas indicated that DHS is paying additional attention to threats to Jewish students. In a change from a usual line, Mayorkas mentioned that DHS is sharing intelligence and information with campus security forces, in addition to the state, local and tribal agencies with which DHS frequently works.

“I have spoken with a number of leaders of colleges and universities with respect to their need to take leadership and to ensure the safety of security students,” Mayorkas said.

Wray and Mayorkas specifically warned about heightened cybersecurity threats; Wray said he expects existing cyberattacks by Iran and non-state actors to expand, along with the threat of physical attacks, if the conflict in the Middle East escalates.

Mayorkas described the Nonprofit Security Grant Program, for which the administration requested an additional \$200 million in emergency funding, as being of “vital importance” to securing Jewish and other communal institutions. He said the administration worked to make the application process easier and to engage in community outreach.

He also said that DHS is working closely with faith-based communities and has security advisers in each state providing them with advice on securing their facilities and communities.

Wray said the FBI is likewise in close touch with local and national Jewish groups. He highlighted that the FBI created a joint unit bringing together hate crimes and domestic terrorism specialists, which he said has allowed the Bureau to more proactively pursue hate-motivated threats, including the Houston bombing plot. And he said that the FBI is increasing its outreach to law enforcement and communities to improve chronic issues with underreporting of hate crimes.

The administration included the NSGP funding request in a lower-profile domestic funding request, not the higher-priority national security-focused request that includes Israel and Ukraine aid.

The two homeland security officials also highlighted increased threats to Arab and Muslim American communities.

Mayorkas and Sen. Josh Hawley (R-MO) engaged in a heated exchange regarding a DHS asylum and immigration officer who posted on social media in support of the Hamas attack on Israel. Hawley questioned whether the official had admitted asylum seekers whom should not have been allowed into the U.S. or discriminated against Jewish asylum seekers and why they had not been fired.

Mayorkas said the official in question had been placed on administrative leave, but said he could not comment further on an “ongoing personnel matter.” He also noted that the official had been hired before he and President Joe Biden took office.

“Is this typical of people working at DHS?” Hawley asked. Mayorkas responded that it was “despicable” for Hawley “to suggest that is emblematic of the men and women of DHS.”

Mayorkas added that he found Hawley's rhetoric particularly offensive given his own heritage as the child of a Holocaust survivor, whose mother lost most of her family to the Nazis.

"I find his adversarial tone to be entirely misplaced," Mayorkas said. "I find it to be disrespectful of me and my heritage."

Mayorkas also said the DHS is assessing calls from Hawley and other Republicans

to revoke visas from foreign students who expressed support for the Hamas attack on Israel; he explained that the issue is one of legal interpretation on which he could not opine, but added, "there is a difference between espousing and endorsing terrorist ideology and speech that is odious that does not rise to that level."

Christine Abizaid, the director of the National Counterterrorism Center, said that

Iran and its proxies are currently seeking to avoid opening a second front in the war with Israel, while still "exacting costs." That situation, she explained, carries the "potential for miscalculation."

She added that there is no current indication of any threat from Iran inside the United States. ♦

OCTOBER 31, 2023

Biden administration pledges plan to combat rising antisemitism on campuses within 2 weeks

Participants told eJewishPhilanthropy that the meeting provided the sense that the Biden administration is taking seriously the jump in antisemitic incidents

By Haley Cohen

The article first appeared in eJewishPhilanthropy.

Jewish leaders suggested the Biden administration strip federal funding from universities that fail to address antisemitism on their campuses during a meeting at the Department of Education on Monday to discuss steps to counter the noted rise of antisemitic incidents on college campuses — which comes amid a 388% increase nationwide since the Oct. 7 terror attacks in Israel.

Second Gentleman Doug Emhoff, Education Secretary Miguel Cardona, Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism Ambassador Deborah Lipstadt and other members of the administration met with 13 Jewish leaders — from across the political and religious range of the community — who have been focused on the rise of antisemitism on campus. The meeting was requested and convened by the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. The administration pledged to make a plan within two weeks to address the wave of antisemitism.

Sheila Katz, CEO of the National Council of Jewish Women, proposed that universities lose their federal funding under Title VI

of the Civil Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin. Nathan Diament, executive director of the Orthodox Union Advocacy Center — an organization that often does not see eye to eye with NCJW — said he had in mind to suggest the same. "The whole community is on the same page here," he told eJewishPhilanthropy. "[Universities should be] made to understand that there are consequences to failing to serve your Jewish students appropriately."

Several participants told eJP that the meeting provided the sense that the Biden administration is taking seriously the rise in antisemitism.

"It was very clear that both the Department of Education and the Biden administration saw this as a worthwhile use of their time and something they needed to be at," Julie Rayman, managing director of policy and political affairs at the American Jewish Committee, said, adding that the discussion was a "combination of voicing angst and anxiety of the community but also trying to provide some real, tangible recommendations for what we hope to see from the Department of Education."

Although the focus was antisemitism on college campuses, the meeting addressed

the issue in K-12 schools as well. As the meeting was wrapping up, Cardona turned to his team and requested concrete plans to address the situation at universities and at K-12 schools within the next two weeks, Diament said.

"You put a defined timeline on something and direct your staff to do it, hopefully you can expect that will be the case," Diament told eJP. "There will be follow-up conversations, for sure."

Jewish community representatives "across the board did two things," Diament continued. "We described in a compelling way how serious the situation is, and we made some recommendations for actions we would like to see."

"One of the phrases people kept using, and that the secretary picked up on, was that we've never seen anything like this before," Diament said, adding that Cardona's reply was that the response needs to be unprecedented.

At the meeting, the Anti-Defamation League called on the Department of Education to send new guidance to universities and K-12 schools on how to deal with antisemitic incidents, provide additional resources for the Office of Civil Rights so that it can meet the backlog

of cases, and to be more proactive in investigating high-profile incidents as they occur, in addition to meeting their commitments under the administration's National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism, which was released in May.

Jonathan Greenblatt, the group's CEO, told eJP that "this is a critical time for the American Jewish community, particularly for Jewish students and faculty on college and university campuses across the country."

"We appreciate Secretary Cardona and Second Gentleman Emhoff meeting with us today to share what the Biden Administration is doing to address the alarming uptick in antisemitic incidents on campuses following the Hamas massacre in Israel," Greenblatt continued. "In our meeting today with Doug Emhoff and other

administration officials, we had an open and spirited conversation, and the level of urgency was appreciated, especially in this moment when antisemitism is surging both across the U.S. and on campuses."

Cardona and White House domestic policy adviser Neera Tanden are slated to visit an unspecified university's Hillel later this week, where they will meet with Jewish students.

The briefing did not address the recent move by Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis to outlaw the group Students for Justice in Palestine at state universities on the grounds it supports terrorism, and whether that move will be emulated by other states.

Since Hamas' rampage, the Secure Community Network has logged 94 incident reports on college campuses, putting October on track to register more antisemitic

incidents than any month recorded since the group's founding in 2004.

The meeting came one day after the kosher dining hall at Cornell University was put on lockdown and Jewish students sheltered in their dorms as anonymous threats against the school's Jewish community were posted on a student discussion forum.

Last week, near Tulane University, which has a student body that is more than 40% Jewish, a pro-Palestinian rally spiraled out of control and led to violence as two men, one of them masked, drove through the protest in a pickup truck waving a Palestinian flag. One of the men attempted to set an Israeli flag on fire, resulting in a fight that left a Jewish student with a broken nose. ♦

OCTOBER 31, 2023

Virginia's attorney general launches investigation into pro-Hamas campus group

The state joins Florida in seeking legal recourse against Students for Justice in Palestine

By Haley Cohen

As the Israel-Hamas war continues to roil U.S. college campuses, Virginia on Tuesday became the second state to target a group affiliated with Students for Justice in Palestine – a move that comes shortly after Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis outlawed SJP at public universities.

Announcing a charities fraud probe, Virginia Attorney General Jason Miyares wrote Tuesday on X, "My office has launched an investigation into the nonprofit American Muslims for Palestine for fundraising without proper registration and for potentially violating Virginia's charitable solicitation laws, including benefitting or providing support to terrorist organizations."

"The Attorney General's Office has reason to believe that the organization may be soliciting contributions in the Commonwealth without first having

registered with the Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services," Miyares' office said in a statement.

"In addition, the Attorney General will investigate allegations that the organization may have used funds raised for impermissible purposes under state law, including benefitting or providing support to terrorist organizations."

The allegations refer to the case *Boim v. American Muslims for Palestine*, in which 17-year-old David Boim was shot and killed in 1996 by Hamas terrorists while studying abroad in Israel. Under the federal Anti-Terrorism Act, his parents sued several U.S. nonprofit organizations for their role in funding Hamas.

After many of the organizations were shut down, a judge ruled in 2004 that the Boims could collect a \$52 million judgment

from the Islamic Association for Palestine (IAP) and the Holy Land Foundation. The case reopened last year when a judge in Illinois ruled that the case against AMP, Americans for Justice in Palestine (AJP) and Rafeeq Jaber, a former president of both the American Muslim Society and the Islamic Association for Palestine, could proceed.

A judge had previously ruled that AMP could not be considered what is legally described as an "alter ego" of the earlier organizations, a classification reserved for corporate cases in which a company shuttered but transfers its assets, institutional knowledge and clientele to a newly created entity.

Under Virginia law, the attorney general has the jurisdiction to investigate possible violations of the state's charitable solicitation law. A spokesperson for Miyares' office told *Jewish Insider*, "we do not comment on the

details of ongoing investigations.”

According to the Anti-Defamation League’s website, AMP is “a leading organization providing anti-Zionist training and education to students and Muslim community organizations in the U.S.”

The ADL’s website adds: “AMP placed a heavy emphasis on supporting and helping coordinate the activity of SJP, assisting in its development as one of primary organizers of anti-Israel events on campus over the years. [In a 2010 brochure], it described SJP as part of a ‘signature project’ to ‘organize and unify the work for Palestine on campuses in the United States.’”

AMP, also known as AJP Educational Foundation, Inc., is a public nonprofit with its headquarters located in Falls Church, Virginia.

The SJP chapter at the University of Virginia described Hamas’ Oct. 7 deadly rampage in Israel as “an unprecedented feat for the 21st century,” and said that “resistance fighters in Gaza” had broken through an “illegal border fence” and had taken “occupation soldiers hostage.”

The SJP chapter at George Mason

University, a public college in Fairfax County, said in response to Oct. 7, “We as Students for Justice in Palestine at George Mason call for a free Palestine, from the river to the sea, and support all forms of resistance which helps [sic] the Palestinian people inch closer to that reality. We call on all those who identify as ‘allies’ to the Palestinian liberation movement to take similar action. Peace cannot exist without justice, and justice for the Palestinian cannot prevail without action. With steadfastness and confrontation, GMU SJP.”

The group participated in a nationwide “Walk Out for Gaza” protest last Wednesday, calling on an Israel-Hamas ceasefire. In 2016, GMU hosted SJP’s sixth annual conference.

Miyares’ move comes on the heels of DeSantis’ order banning SJP at Florida state universities last week, the first time a state has outlawed the pro-Palestinian group. “Based on the National SJP’s support of terrorism, in consultation with Governor DeSantis, the student chapters must be deactivated,” the state university system’s chancellor, Ray Rodrigues, wrote in a memo to university leaders.

The letter explains that it is a “felony under Florida law to knowingly provide material support ... to a designated foreign terrorist organization. These chapters exist under the headship of the National Students for Justice in Palestine, who distributed a toolkit identifying themselves as part of the Operation Al Aqsa Flood [Hamas’ name for their terrorist attacks on Israel].”

After DeSantis’ SJP ban in Florida, Kenneth Marcus, founder and chairman of the Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law, told JI that “some states are starting to look at this carefully,” adding that he is “reasonably confident that Florida won’t be the last.”

During a meeting on Monday at the Department of Education, one Jewish community leader recommended the department examine actions from student groups on campuses supporting the Hamas attacks because they could be “engaging in material support for terrorism, which would be a criminal matter.”

Jewish Insider’s Executive Editor Melissa Weiss contributed reporting. ♦

NOVEMBER 2, 2023

Hundreds gather to mark 3rd anniversary of Rabbi Sacks’ death, consider how religion can ‘heal a fractured world’

Interfaith panel reflects on the devastation of Oct. 7 attacks and how Jews, Christians and Muslims can grow from them

By Haley Cohen

The article first appeared in eJewishPhilanthropy.

The question that Gila Sacks has been asked repeatedly since Hamas’ Oct. 7 deadly rampage in Israel is what wisdom her father would have offered.

Sacks is the director of prevention services in the United Kingdom’s Department for Health and Social Care and the youngest daughter of the late Rabbi Lord

Jonathan Sacks, the British chief rabbi from 1991 to 2013, who died three years ago.

“There were times that either I individually, or we collectively, found to be very frightening or difficult and he would say to take a broad view,” she told eJP at a reception on Tuesday night, following an event to mark Rabbi Sacks’ third *yahrzeit* this Saturday, called “The Sacks Conversation: To Heal a Fractured World,” named for the title of one of the 25 books Sacks authored.

“Though he understood the problems of the world more acutely and in greater depth than any of us, that didn’t get in the way of his hope. Ultimately, he believed that any problem could be solved. It might be difficult but ultimately people create circumstances and can make them better — he really believed that.”

As college campuses have been among the places hardest hit by increased antisemitism since Oct. 7, the younger Sacks,

who serves on the board of The Rabbi Sacks Legacy, said her father would address the lack of moral clarity in young people by telling them: “There’s an enormous amount that every one of us can do.”

“We can look to leaders, politicians and rabbis and that’s important, but none of that can get in the way of the strong individual responsibility we each have to influence the people around us,” she said.

More than 400 people from across Judaism’s denominational spectrum gathered to remember Sacks — yearning for a piece of the rabbi’s insight during a dark time. The event — held at Carnegie Hall in Manhattan, a tribute to the rabbi’s love of music — opened with a musical performance of “Oseh Shalom,” dedicated to the Israel Defense Forces, by Shimon Cramer, a former chazzan at the Riverdale Jewish Center, who now lives in Israel.

The discussion also featured an interfaith panel featuring Cardinal Timothy Dolan, the archbishop of New York; Imam Abdullah Antepli, an interfaith leader who teaches at the Duke Divinity School; and Rabbi Meir Soloveichik, who leads Shearith Israel — often called the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue — an Orthodox congregation in Manhattan and directs the Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought at Yeshiva University.

Each religious leader pointed to teachings from Sacks — who died at age 72 after a short battle with pancreatic cancer — that could help heal a fractured post-Oct. 7 society. Sacks was an advocate of interfaith dialogue and sat on the Board of World Religious Leaders for the Elijah Interfaith Institute, though he faced criticism in his lifetime for not taking part in Jewish pluralist and interdenominational initiatives like Limmud.

Dolan recalled meeting Sacks once and corresponding with him on many occasions. “One of the things that strikes me about his discourse would be to heal a fractured world, we first need to acknowledge, identify and admit the fracture. Sometimes he would counsel us that we tend to avoid, deny or run away from [the problem]. He, of course, as a deep Jewish scholar would know the power and significance of repentance. We are constantly acknowledging and admitting the fractures within so that can be healed

and, if I understand correctly, can lead to the healing of others.”

Antepli, an associate professor at Duke University, fellow on Jewish-Muslim relations at the Shalom Hartman Institute and co-director of the Muslim Leadership Initiative, said he attends synagogue more often than most of the Jews he knows. “The world was fractured enough before October 7. But after the barbaric savagery and monstrous terrorism that has been committed in the name of Palestinian suffering or in the name of Islam, as a Muslim it cuts much deeper. It really hurts. For those of us who are Muslim and love [Judaism], the least we can do is condemn in the clearest terms possible this barbaric savagery without ‘ands’ and ‘buts’ to make sure this is unacceptable.”

Antepli, who said he immediately became close friends and “conversation partners” with Sacks upon meeting, continued, “No scripture of Islam could justify this... I cannot even find words to express how shaken I am. What religions do best in these times of calamity and disaster is to slow us down... make sure we are not revealing the worst of ourselves. For those of us who are not holding arms and wearing uniforms, our job is to make sure we are better than our enemies. The holy Quran says ‘replace evil with what’s better.’ You can find many similar verses in Judaism and Christianity.”

Soloveichik said the one statement he’s heard “over and over” within the Jewish community since Oct. 7 is, “I wish Rabbi Sacks were here with us, to speak for us, to speak with us, to guide as at this moment.”

“That’s a sign of what a loss we are marking,” Soloveichik said. “But also what a legacy we are marking. When you think about it, what other rabbinic leader should inspire a gathering such as this in his memory?”

Although the event was planned before Oct. 7 by The Rabbi Sacks Legacy, Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. Michael Herzog said, in virtual remarks, that the title, “To Heal a Fractured World,” was particularly timely.

“As we fight a war for our home which was imposed on us by Hamas, a terrorist organization, we will go in and we will destroy the war machine. We will destroy the

leadership that built and operated that war machine. But there is a deeper war going on here. There is a cultural, civilizational war. Those who went in on Oct. 7 and carried out these atrocities were driven by a set of values, by a culture that directed them at burning people alive, at taking captive Holocaust survivors. They celebrated the blood of Jews. Those who support them support the glorification of terror. We all have to wake up and understand that this is a defining moment that calls for moral clarity, exactly as Rabbi Jonathan Sacks told us.”

“I strongly believe that Judaism has so much to offer to heal a fractured world,” Herzog said. “Israel is a grieving nation but we are united... and with the power of our faith we will prevail.”

In the keynote address, Shari Redstone, board chair of Paramount Global, said, “Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks of blessed memory loved to share an old Hasidic teaching that saw the Jewish people as a living Torah scroll with each person as one of its letters. For Rabbi Sacks this offered a radical insight about human dignity. If a single letter in a scroll is damaged or missing, a torah is considered invalid. If we ignore or dismiss a single person’s humanity, our collective humanity suffers.”

In addition to Gila Sacks and her siblings, the event was attended by Rabbi Sacks’ wife, Lady Elaine Sacks, and Sacks’ brother. ♦

Aramco CEO calls for ‘international standards’ on AI

Amin Nasser, head of the world’s largest oil producer, made his remarks at the Global Cybersecurity Forum in Riyadh

By Kelsey Warner

The article first appeared in The Circuit.

The head of Saudi Aramco called for an international set of rules to govern artificial intelligence and protect businesses from security breaches.

CEO Amin Nasser told a packed hall today at the Global Cybersecurity Forum in Riyadh he believes in “international standards that can keep pace with the rapid development of AI.”

The stakes are high. Aramco was the victim of one of the biggest cyber attacks in the internet era in 2012 that threatened to shut off 10% of global oil supply.

On Wednesday, Aramco’s venture capital arm, Wa’ed Ventures, invested in SpiderSilk, a UAE startup that offers AI-powered cybersecurity services. The \$500 million fund led the \$9 million round and signed a collaborative agreement as the state-oil business – and world’s No. 3 most valuable company – pushes to ramp up its

cybersecurity offerings.

The Riyadh forum is being held against a backdrop of massive global interest in how the development of artificial intelligence will be governed and the direction of AI regulation starting to take shape.

Technology leaders are reacting to an executive order from the Biden administration earlier this week, one of the farthest-reaching policies on the use of artificial intelligence ever set out. Meanwhile, G7 leaders also agreed on the same day to a voluntary code of conduct on AI, providing a broader coalition of supporters including the US and Japan for the legally binding rules that the EU is now finalizing under the EU AI Act. And a summit on AI safety is underway in the U.K. today, organized by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak.

In a decisive week for the future of online safety, the forum in Riyadh is the Arab world’s part of the conversation.

Saudi Arabia has convened Gulf leaders

including Yousef Al-Benyan, Saudi Arabia’s minister of education; Abdulrahman Al-Malki, president of the national cyber security agency in Qatar; and Ali Bin Salim Al Balushi, chief of the electronic defense center in Oman, alongside executives from Chinese telecom Huawei and U.S. cybersecurity firm Palo Alto Networks in the gilded halls of The Ritz-Carlton.

The kingdom positioned some of its most prominent national entities – Saudi Aramco, telecom STC and mega-project NEOM – as security leaders in the energy, communications and urban planning industries.

In the opening session, former Portuguese president José Manuel Barroso, who was also president of the European Commission, warned against what he sees as a decline in global cooperation on cybersecurity. ♦