

THE WEEKLY PRINT

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SEPTEMBER 4, 2025

Amb. Leiter: Nature of U.S.-Israel aid may change in coming years

It's a very partisan atmosphere in Washington right now. Strong support for Israel in the [Trump] administration almost drives the Democratic opposition into opposing very close support for Israel,' the ambassador said

By Lahav Harkov

Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. Yechiel Leiter arrived at his post in January as Israel was more than a year into its war with Hamas in Gaza and facing declining American support for the Jewish state.

The Trump administration has been much friendlier to the government in Jerusalem than its predecessor, supporting the Israeli war effort in Gaza with no limitations on arms shipments. Yet, the broader political atmosphere is more hostile to Israel than it has been in decades.

The turn away from Israel was reflected in a recent Senate vote in which a majority of Democrats supported blocking some arms sales to Israel, as well as in the growth of the isolationist wing of the Republican Party, the rise of influential media figures who peddle antisemitism and public opinion about Israel in decline.

Leiter spoke with *Jewish Insider's* Lahav Harkov and the executive director of the Misgav Institute for National Security and Zionist Strategy, Asher Fredman, on the "Misgav Mideast Horizons" podcast this

week about his efforts to engage members of both parties, the future of the U.S.-Israel alliance, what is next in the war in Gaza and more.

Amid these concerning political trends, Leiter said that the U.S. and Israel have started to discuss what will happen after the Obama-era 10-year Memorandum of Understanding between the countries, which currently commits \$3.8 billion a year in American defense aid to Israel annually, expires in 2028.

While Israel's official position favors continuing aid, some in Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud Party and others on the Israeli right have been advocating for moving from a model of aid to one of collaboration on joint projects.

"Maybe we'll change the nature [of the MOU], where there will be greater [joint] research and development between our two countries, rather than relying on American weapons," Leiter said.

Leiter emphasized that the defense relationship between Israel and the U.S.

benefits both countries.

"Recently, there was a podcast with [Rep.] Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA) in which she said, 'Why are we giving \$3.8 billion to Israel when people in the United States don't have health care?'" he said. "What she neglected to mention is that the vast majority of the \$3.8 billion is spent in the United States and actually is providing jobs — and health care — for American workers. It's all American weapons ... purchased with American aid. So it's a win-win situation."

Leiter also quoted Gen. George Keegan who once told journalist Wolf Blitzer that the value of Israeli intelligence is worth five CIAs.

"You know how much that would cost [to replace]? The level of cooperation we have at this point between our intelligence communities is very, very, very deep and wide. We provide a tremendous service to the United States' interests in the Middle East," he said.

The U.S. and Israel will have to evaluate "a paradigm shift" in the region when

working on the next MOU, Leiter said.

"I think we have to start from a broader view of things in terms of the geostrategic realities that are developing in the Middle East. ... The ramifications of [the strikes on Iran in] Operation Rising Lion and Midnight Hammer, but really the ramifications of the war against Iranian proxies over the past almost two years now since Oct. 7, [2023], is a changing Middle East," Leiter said.

"We've seen all of the proxies degraded. We're about to completely destroy Hamas. Hezbollah is dramatically degraded to the point where the Lebanese government is actually moving towards disarming them. We have the fall of the Assad regime in Syria. Nobody could have imagined that would have happened. And the Houthis are being degraded ... There's a new Middle East out there," he added.

In Leiter's view, the result of the last two years is that moderate Muslim states face fewer threats from Iran and other radical Islamists, increasing the chances of what he termed "an Abraham Accords 2.0."

"That enables the United States to rely more on a collective between Israel and its neighbors, and have less of an American footprint in the Middle East," he said.

"Therefore," the ambassador added, "the nature of any MOU or collaborative effort is going to change."

Leiter spoke to JI before a day of meetings on Capitol Hill, in which he planned to meet with Democrats and Republicans. He has made sure to meet with critics of Israel in addition to friendly members of Congress.

"I will always divide my day [between the parties] and make it as much of a bipartisan effort as I possibly can," he said. "Not only for tactical political reasons — the Democrats can take control of Congress in a year and a half and if we haven't paid them the proper respect and attention, we're going to pay a very serious price — but beyond the tactical political plane, I believe that Israel is a bipartisan issue and should remain so."

Leiter said that some of Israel's critics are reflexively critical: "It's a very partisan atmosphere in Washington right now, which makes it very complicated. You can see this in issues that are not related to Israel ... If the administration is saying one thing, the Democratic opposition believes it's got to say something else. There's strong support for

Israel in the [Trump] administration, so that almost drives the Democratic opposition into opposing very close support for Israel."

The ambassador emphasized that "in the Trump administration, we've seen a level of collaboration between Israel and the United States that we've never had [before]," citing the joint strikes on Iran's nuclear program in June. "There's never been this kind of cooperation at this level. We're very close on the one hand. On the other hand, there are dramatic and very intense challenges to this relationship."

In addition to "the woke left, which has distanced itself from Israel, because we're perceived as ... the white men that have dominated and written history," Leiter lamented the "conspiratorial, isolationist" right.

"Tucker Carlson and Candace Owens' orbit is not America First, it's Israel and Jews last," he said. "America First is fine. We don't have an issue with that. We put Israel first, America puts America first ... I think it's obvious and elemental. With the isolationist and conspiratorial right, Israel is always wrong and the Jews are always behind everything that's wrong."

Still, Leiter said he has not found that anti-Israel view in the halls of the White House, State Department or Pentagon.

"There are legitimate strategic positions that the U.S. should put more focus on the far East rather than the Middle East. ... I think that actually may be advantageous to Israel and the Middle East as a whole if that's going to happen in a gradual and careful way as we move into the future," he added.

About the ongoing war against Hamas, Leiter said, "There's no public in the world that wants to end the war more than we [Israelis] do. No one has suffered as much as we do. Since the day Israel was founded, we haven't experienced one day of peace. Not a day. We want to end this war and we can't do it unless we have defeated this enemy. ... The ultimate goal is going to be a complete demilitarization of Gaza," he said.

Leiter pushed back against accusations that Israel plans to force residents out of Gaza with backing from the Trump administration.

"The president of the United States didn't talk about forcing anybody, but talked about giving them the option ... Why

not allow these people the opportunity to choose? That's all we're suggesting."

The ambassador noted that Israel has facilitated the exit of 40,000 people from Gaza who have visas to receive medical care in other countries, and they left through Israel, not Egypt, which would charge them tens of thousands of dollars to transit through their country.

"Why wouldn't Egypt just open the border and let people go through?" he asked.

Leiter also spoke out against a Palestinian state, saying that very few Israelis still support the proposition.

"Even the left-of-center realize that the bandwidth for another state west of the Jordan River is untenable and unacceptable. Since Oct. 7, that bandwidth has narrowed further, and it's about a hair's breadth now ... Everybody's got to get used to that and stop talking about this two-state solution," he said.

"There will be far more normalization and peaceful relations with our Palestinian neighbors once we get beyond this red herring of the two-state solution," the ambassador added.

Leiter said that there are alternatives to a Palestinian state, including "autonomous zones ... total autonomy," while "security and overall foreign relations are going to remain in Israel's hands."

He spoke about possible dramatic economic growth benefiting Palestinians in the West Bank, which could come as a result of planned infrastructure corridors crossing from the Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea.

The ambassador expressed hope about an "Abraham Accords 2.0," in which Israel normalizes relations with Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Malaysia and several Central Asian Muslim countries.

"Once that happens, the whole issue of saying everything is based on Palestinian centrality goes away," he said.

With a dozen countries planning to recognize a Palestinian state in the coming weeks, in an effort led by France and Saudi Arabia, Leiter accused Europe of attempting "a cleansing process, because if you can condemn Israel for genocide ... that means that what Europe was guilty of 80 years ago is not unique."

In addition, the ambassador argued that European leaders are concerned

about getting the votes of growing Muslim populations in their countries.

"They couldn't care less about Palestinians. If they really cared, they'd issue some visas. I mean, France could issue 150,000 visas and give people a new opportunity at life, but that's the last thing they want to do. They don't want to allow in more Muslims. ...It's a tragedy that we're paying the price for this," he added.

Recognizing a Palestinian state is "prolonging the war," Leiter said. "Basically what the French are doing is declaring Oct. 7

Palestine Independence Day. Brilliant, right? Let's reward these people for slaughter and massacre."

"It's an outrage. It's immoral. And we have to stay the course. We are ultimately going to be vindicated. I have no doubt about it," he said.

Leiter's son, Moshe, a physician and father of six, was killed in battle in Gaza on Nov. 10, 2023.

Leiter said his son was "a very committed Jew and Zionist and he knew what he was fighting for ... for the right of the Jewish

people to live in their homeland in peace and security."

"I carry him on my back every day, and it gives me the power, the energy, the ability to go forward," he said. "You really have to make a decision when you lose someone that you love so much and you're so close to and fills your life with meaning and purpose. He's the reason why it's so hard to get up in the morning, and he's also the reason why I do, because you have to make that choice and move forward." ♦

SEPTEMBER 4, 2025

Rep. Latimer: Israel's critics are overlooking Hamas' responsibility for Gaza war, aid crisis

The freshman New York congressman also said that Israel must do more to pursue an end to the war, make its case to the world and provide aid in Gaza

By Marc Rod

Having recently returned from a trip to Israel, Rep. George Latimer (D-NY) is emphasizing that Israel's critics in the United States and around the world are overlooking Hamas' key role in perpetuating the conflict and contributing to the humanitarian issues in Gaza, strengthening the terrorist group's position and insulating it from external pressures.

At the same time, the New York Democrat also said that Israel must do more to pursue an end to the war, make its case to the world and provide aid in Gaza.

Latimer, speaking to *Jewish Insider* last week, said that the trip, organized by the AIPAC-affiliated American Israel Education Foundation for Democratic freshmen and leading Democratic lawmakers, had reinforced his view that the situation on the ground is more complicated than the more simplistic narratives demonizing Israel that have been spread by some critics and media.

"When you see on the ground, you understand it is not a simple black-and-white situation," Latimer, a first-term congressman from Westchester County, N.Y., who sits on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said. "People come up to me

and say, 'Israel is practicing genocide. What they're doing is evil and we need to stop it.' And then you get on the ground and you realize how much more complicated it is than that."

He said that American critics of Israel fail to acknowledge Hamas' "role in all of this and its contributory actions." He said he sees a "lack of appreciation here in the United States that Hamas is committed — has shown no signs to want to sit, talk peace, have a cessation of hostilities. ... That makes it very, very hard to plot a strategy, if the other side is completely intransigent."

Latimer said the situation is comparable to overlooking the fact that the U.S. entered World War II because Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, or that the U.S. invaded Afghanistan because of the 9/11 attacks. He said that the "mindset" that motivated such attacks doesn't disappear overnight, and can take protracted conflict to address.

At the same time, he said that "there's a gap between what [the Israeli government] needs to be doing and what it is doing, and it's a serious gap." He said he doesn't see proposals to relocate the population of Gaza out of the enclave, discussed during

a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, as "workable" or "humane."

He addressed friction within Israeli society over Israel's war plans in Gaza, and said that Netanyahu's decision-making may be shaped by his far-right coalition members, adding that "if there's no movement from Hamas, what can you ask Israel to do unilaterally?"

"So Netanyahu's strategies present as intransigent in the face of intransigence on the other side," Latimer continued. "You need some joint breakthrough where both sides step back from the path that they're on, and both sides have to be willing to do that, if you can expect the other side to also then do that."

He noted the difficulty of forcing a dug-in enemy like Hamas to surrender, comparing it to the challenge of forcing a Japanese surrender during WWII.

Latimer unseated Rep. Jamaal Bowman (D-NY), a vocal Israel critic, in the 2024 Democratic primary, boosted by significant support from his district's Jewish community as well as national pro-Israel groups.

Latimer told JI he thinks Israel has not done enough to try to win over or influence global opinion in its favor. Latimer said he believes that the Israeli government views such efforts as a lost cause and not worth attempting.

"There's a case to be made [for Israel]. But in lieu of that, the rhetoric is all what Israel is doing and not doing, and how evil they are, when, in fact, all of this came from an attack that was horrific on Oct. 7," Latimer said.

He said that there have been "atrocities" on the Israeli side, pointing broadly to settler violence in the West Bank, but said that "the question is, overall, are you weighing all of these things together, or as the world opinion, and much of the United States opinion, particularly among younger people, has been framed completely around 'Israel bad,'" ignoring the "evil that's been done on behalf of the other side of this. That is a contributing reason why we're in the situation we're in."

"The fact that people are starving is horrific. But as long as the world blames Israel for it solely, Hamas is winning. Why would they change any strategies?" Latimer said. "The leaders of Hamas are not sitting in the tunnels. ... They're sitting in the safety of the protection of [Turkish President Recep Tayyip] Erdogan or over in Qatar. Therefore, they're not under the pressure."

Latimer said that the food supply in Gaza was a key issue he examined on the trip, calling starvation in Gaza a "legitimate" problem.

He said that the current four Gaza Humanitarian Foundation aid distribution sites are "nowhere near enough," given the "massive number of people that need to be fed and housed."

But he added that Hamas being "unwilling to cooperate" in the safe delivery of aid is an impediment to efforts to improve the humanitarian situation and that the United Nations "in the eyes of the Israelis, has lost credibility."

He said that the best path forward would likely be for a coalition of Arab countries to take the lead of a humanitarian aid distribution entity: "We need to have a third

party that has credibility."

"Israel is not doing enough to solve the problem, and Hamas is doing things to prohibit the problem from being solved," Latimer said, calling on Israel to work to increase the number of food distribution centers and strengthen supply lines and on Hamas to stop attempting to intercept food and sow chaos at distribution sites.

"The fact that people are starving is horrific. But as long as the world blames Israel for it solely, Hamas is winning. Why would they change any strategies?" he said. "The leaders of Hamas are not sitting in the tunnels. ... They're sitting in the safety of the protection of [Turkish President Recep Tayyip] Erdogan or over in Qatar. Therefore, they're not under the pressure."

"What I saw in September 2005 gave me hope. What I see when I go back 20 years later is, you shake your head and you go, 'Why did it turn out this way?'" Latimer said. "Did it turn out this way because Israel wanted it to turn out this way? Israel didn't want Oct. 7. Israel didn't want all of its young men in the reserves and active duty, constantly on a wartime footing."

He declined to weigh in definitively — citing the limited information at his disposal and his limited power as a lone congressman — on whether the U.S. needs to increase pressure on its allies in Turkey or Qatar to expel or detain those Hamas leaders, but said that "clearly there has been insufficient pressure on Hamas" because its leaders have shown no urgency to return the hostages, negotiate in good faith or participate in uncorrupted food distribution.

Latimer said he first traveled to Israel two decades ago, just after the Israeli disengagement from Gaza, and that there was hope at the time that the Israeli withdrawal would "allow the opportunity for Gaza to experience peace and some kind of growth."

"What I saw in September 2005 gave me hope. What I see when I go back 20 years later is, you shake your head and you go, 'Why did it turn out this way?'" Latimer said. "Did it turn out this way because Israel wanted it to turn out this way? Israel didn't want Oct. 7. Israel didn't want all of its

young men in the reserves and active duty, constantly on a wartime footing."

He said that if Gaza's leaders had pursued growth and development over the past 20 years, "we could be in a very different place today," but instead Hamas seized power and used Gaza as a platform to attack Israel.

Asked about recent decisions by European countries to unilaterally recognize a Palestinian state, which came around the time of Latimer's trip, the congressman said that he supports a two-state solution, but one that "comes out of a negotiated process," noting the many outstanding issues to be worked through.

"You cannot expect Israel to survive with a hostile entity interspersed with its borders, and yet be its own country. And there has to be a sense that this country can function and provide its services to its people and maintain civil control. None of those things are automatically in place yet, so I don't know what we're recognizing in substance," Latimer said.

"I think what we're recognizing in symbolism is European countries that basically are saying, 'We need to have a two state solution,' and probably their population is reacting to what's happening in the moment and putting pressure on their governments to do this," he continued.

"The Palestinian Authority certainly has a steep mountain to climb, but right now, they're the best hope that you have of a presence — and certainly it's not Hamas, it's certainly not coming out of any of the groups that Iran is backing or has backed," Latimer said.

Based on the delegation's meeting with Palestinian Authority leaders, Latimer said that he believes there is an "intent" and "willingness" in the PA to pursue needed reform and bolster credibility with the Palestinian population.

"How much success they're going to have with the civilian population to accomplish those things — it's going to be a tall task," he said.

At the same time, he noted that some Arab governments such as those in Jordan and Egypt maintain cooperative relationships with Israel even as many of

their citizens remain hostile.

“The Palestinian Authority certainly has a steep mountain to climb, but right now, they’re the best hope that you have of a presence — and certainly it’s not Hamas,

it’s certainly not coming out of any of the groups that Iran is backing or has backed,” he continued.

In the long term, Latimer added, the Abraham Accords represent a path forward

for the region, and said that moderate Sunni Arab states want to see a viable and demilitarized Palestinian Authority government that can credibly govern the Palestinian people. ♦

SEPTEMBER 4, 2025

After court rules on fraud appeals, American Zionist Movement certifies election results

Right-wing and religious slates win plurality of the 155 U.S. seats; Haredim to have unprecedented level of representation at next month's World Zionist Congress

By Judah Ari Gross

The article first appeared in eJewishPhilanthropy.

The American Zionist Movement certified the votes for this year’s election on Wednesday after the Zionist Supreme Court ruled last week on the remaining irregularities that have been holding up the process.

With the certification, AZM has also allocated the 155 U.S. delegate seats based on the 224,969 valid votes for the upcoming World Zionist Congress, which will be held next month in Jerusalem.

Overall, right-wing and religious slates received the plurality of the votes, edging out the centrist and progressive slates, which won the plurality of seats in the 2020 election.

The largest American party in the World Zionist Congress will be the Reform movement, which received 47,648 votes, earning it 33 seats. This represents a slight drop compared to the 2020 election, when the slate received 39 seats.

The Haredi-linked Am Yisrael Chai and Eretz HaKodesh earned 21 and 19 seats, respectively, giving *Haredim* an unprecedented level of influence in the Zionist movement. Until 2020, no Haredi-affiliated slates served in the World Zionist Congress, owing to the community’s historically ambivalent stance on Zionism.

The Conservative movement’s Mercaz USA also earned 19 seats, making it the only existing progressive slate to see an increase in voter share. The Orthodox Israel Coalition-Mizrachi won 18 seats.

The progressive Hatikvah slate earned eight seats, and the right-wing ZOA Coalition won six. Aish Ha’am, an arm of the Aish HaTorah movement that ran for the first time, won five seats. Kol Israel, Vision and the Israeli-American Council, which also ran for the first time, each earned four seats. For Kol Israel and Vision this represents a significant increase from the 2020 election, when they one two and one, respectively.

The America-Israel Democracy Coalition, which is aligned with the Israeli anti-judicial overhaul protest movement, won three seats. The Sephardi Shas party, which had been disqualified for its conduct during the elections regarding fraudulent votes and was later reinstated, will have two seats, as will the pro-West Bank annexation Israel365 Action slate and Beyachad, which represents Jews from the former Soviet Union. The progressive religious Dorshei Torah V’Tzion, the centrist Jewish Future, the liberal A New Union, the American Forum for Israel and the right-wing Herut North America slates all earned one seat.

The Americans 4 Israel slate did not receive enough votes for a seat, and the Achdut Israel slate, which was found to have both registered initially with false signatures and received more than 2,000 fraudulent votes, was disqualified.

This year saw a major increase in the number of slates, from 14 in the 2020 election to 22 now. The main effect of this proliferation was a marked drop in the number of delegates for existing right-wing and religious slates. The ZOA

Coalition, which had 20% of the votes cast for it deemed fraudulent and disqualified, received 8.3% of the total vote in the 2020 election, while getting 3.7% this time, a 55.7% decrease. The Orthodox Israel Coalition – Mizrachi received 17.6% of the vote in 2020 and 11.6% in this election, a 34% reduction. The Eretz HaKodesh slate also lost nearly 25% of its share of the vote, getting 16.2% in 2020 and 12.2% now.

This year’s election, which was held from March to May, saw the largest turnout in the Zionist movement’s history, with nearly double the number of votes cast than in the 2020 election.

The 155 American delegates will join some 370 representatives from Israel and around the world to decide how to allocate an annual budget of some \$1 billion and run the so-called National Institutions: the World Zionist Organization, Jewish National Fund-Keren Kayemet LeIsrael, Keren Hayesod and Jewish Agency for Israel.

“Based on the final election results that have been certified today, we can say without question that the Zionist movement in the United States is stronger than ever,” Herbert Block, executive director of AZM, said in a statement. “American Jews’ record-breaking turnout means that the overall U.S. delegation to the 39th World Zionist Congress is positioned to have a greater backing and prominence than ever in advancing a multitude of high-priority Jewish and Zionist causes.” ♦

China uses WWII memory to project power in military parade and international diplomacy

The parade was an example of how Beijing has used WWII not only to encourage nationalism, but to project power internationally, from Jerusalem to Taipei and beyond

By Lahav Harkov

China showcased its growing aggressiveness on the world stage in a major military parade on Wednesday, showing off missiles and fighter jets to mark the 80th anniversary of Japan's surrender in World War II with Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korea's Kim Jong Un in attendance.

The parade was an example of how Beijing has used WWII not only to encourage nationalism, but to project power internationally, from Jerusalem to Taipei and beyond.

President Donald Trump pushed back against the spectacle in Beijing, writing on Truth Social that Chinese leader Xi Jinping ought to "mention the massive amount of support and 'blood' that the United States of America gave to China in order to help it secure its FREEDOM from a very unfriendly foreign invader. Many Americans died in China's quest for Victory and Glory. I hope that they are rightfully Honored and Remembered for their Bravery and Sacrifice! ...Please give my warmest regards to Vladimir Putin, and Kim Jong Un as you conspire against The United States of America."

The parade came shortly after China hosted a summit with Putin, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other Eurasian leaders, deepening ties among major powers not aligned with the West. The attendees issued a communique last week strongly condemning "the military aggression launched by Israel and the United States against Iran" in June.

China has also used World War II and Holocaust terminology in recent weeks as it continues its hostility against Israel, calling Israel's war a "genocide," even as the Chinese Embassy in Israel held an event highlighting Beijing's positioning with the Allies in World

War II.

The recent statements reflect a broader double game China has played in its relations toward Israel, consistently showing hostility to Israel on the international stage since the Oct. 7, 2023 Hamas-led attacks, while within Israel, the Chinese ambassador has pursued a friendlier posture.

Last month, Beijing, in a statement from the Chinese Communist Party's Information Office, accused the U.S. of "serving as an accomplice to the genocide in Gaza." The statement, Tuvia Gering, a fellow at the Atlantic Council and the Institute for National Security Studies at Tel Aviv University, said, marked the first time an official Chinese document accused Israel of genocide.

Gering told *Jewish Insider* that "you see the word [genocide] being used more and more by Chinese academics, and they are the ones who help formulate China's Middle East policy ... In recent months, I have been seeing it used much more frequently, as well as other accusations against Israel and Jewish people."

"From the beginning of the war, there have been comparisons between the Jewish state and Japanese imperialists," Gering said. "From the Chinese perspective, [Japan] did some of the most terrible things, like what the Nazis did to us. That vile, inhumane violence is ingrained in every child in China's psyche from a young age."

The Chinese consul-general in Osaka, Japan, has published posts on X over the course of the Gaza war comparing Israel to Nazis and "a demon ... that will even devour a baby," and saying "we must get rid of it once and for all." Beijing has not apologized for the diplomat's statements.

That being said, Gering posited that the use of the word "genocide" was unlikely

to reflect a policy shift by Beijing "because of the sensitivity to how the word is being used against China" in relation to its Uyghur minority.

The genocide accusation came in response to the State Department's report on human rights practices in China in 2024, which opened by stating that "Genocide and crimes against humanity occurred ... in China against predominantly Muslim Uyghurs."

As such, Gering said the use of "genocide" in an official document is primarily meant to target the U.S.

Similarly, Carice Witte, founder of SIGNAL Group, a think tank focused on China-Israel relations, told JI that the statement is an example of Beijing "using Israel as a tool."

To China, she said, "the Middle East and Israel are much more about great power competition than the local issues."

"Israel is a very small country that is no longer of great interest to China, and its positions on Israel are not about Israel as much as they are about China's global interests," Witte said. "By saying the U.S. supports genocide in Gaza, that is not about Israel, but about the U.S. and the global south. Because so many countries hate Israel, [China] believes that if they criticize Israel, more countries will support them."

A source involved in China-Israel relations who spoke on condition of anonymity told JI they heard a Chinese diplomat say that "they use the Palestinians to make trouble for the U.S. the way the U.S. uses Taiwan to make trouble for them."

Ten days after Beijing accused Israel of genocide, the Chinese Embassy in Israel held a ceremony marking 80 years since the end of World War II in the Pacific arena, and honoring "Jakob Rosenfeld, a Jewish

doctor whose heroic contribution to the Chinese people's fight against fascism is a lasting symbol of international solidarity," the invitation read.

Gering also noted that China has made diplomatic use of the fact that over 20,000 Jews escaped the Holocaust to Shanghai, including, famously, the entire Mir Yeshiva from Lithuania. They fled to an enclave in Japanese-occupied Shanghai that did not require a visa for entry, until 1941, when Japan forced the Jewish refugees into a ghetto and banned Jewish immigration to the city. The only Chinese diplomat known to have played a role in helping Jewish refugees was a representative of the Republic of China, which the Chinese Communist Party that currently rules China later defeated in a civil war.

Like many other countries, including China's ally Russia, which also holds WWII victory parades, Beijing "employs selective historical memory," Gering said. "There is a very obvious, explicit utilization of memory ... Undermining or silencing the voices of victims of the Holocaust and refugees in Shanghai ... When you listen to Chinese ambassadors, you think that there was a unique civilizational benevolence by the Chinese people, who opened their arms when the rest of the world rejected Jews ... It's a complete distortion of the story of the Jewish refugees who lived in squalid conditions."

Israel generally does not push back against that narrative for "political

expedience," Gering said, explaining that "it is good for soft power to say we share their sentiment of anti-fascism."

Witte said that China's politicization of World War II and the Holocaust reflects a broader "two-pronged path. On the one hand, China has a big-picture policy and the Beijing stage is for the track that is harsh on Israel. Local policy, where the embassy is the stage, is the pro-Israel track."

"Obviously, Beijing is exponentially louder, more recognized and more heard than the embassy," she added.

Gering pointed out that Chinese Ambassador to Israel Xiao Junzheng, who arrived at his post in December, "emphasizes friendship between Jews and Chinese people, while Chinese propaganda says Israel is committing genocide and compares Jews to Nazis."

Xiao "has been given a mandate to act like nothing [bad] happened," Gering added. "He even wrote an article saying not to let the war define the relationship. Even though ... [the CCP] legal advisor said the Hamas attack [on Oct. 7, 2023] was A-OK, don't split hairs, let's talk about Chinese cars and how many Jews we saved. They're kind of forgetting about Jews living today."

Gering also expressed concerns about Beijing's recent use of Nazi terminology to describe the government in Taiwan.

The CCP newspaper, People's Daily, published an article that compared Taiwan's President William Lai and the ruling Democratic Progressive Party to the Nazis. The article also described civil society groups seeking to educate Taiwanese citizens to be prepared for possible missile attacks from China and to recognize Chinese propaganda in the media as "Nazi-like."

The article "even feigns concern for their democracy, which is ironic in a CCP mouthpiece," Gering said.

Gering expressed concern that the language is similar to that used by Russia in the years before its invasion of Ukraine.

"The denazification card is what Putin's Kremlin used as a pretext for its invasion and its ongoing war in Ukraine," Gering noted. "This prompts us to ask if this is a precursor to a People's Liberation Army [Chinese military] denazification campaign in Taiwan."

Still, Gering said, Taiwanese politics are very divisive, and opposition politicians have also called the current government Nazis, leading to condemnation by Israeli and German diplomats in Taipei. "That gave a hechsher [kosher certification] for the CCP to use this kind of pernicious rhetoric, as well," he said.

"In the more immediate term, it's probably just a tactical way for the CCP to sow division and weaken the Taiwanese leadership and democratic institutions," he added. ♦

New Humash features Rabbi Sacks' posthumously published translations

English translation, commentary by former U.K. chief rabbi seeks to 'make Torah relevant to us today'

By Lahav Harkov

Former British Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks was a towering figure in Jewish life whose unique blend of Torah and Western wisdom attracted adherents around the world for many years before his death in 2020.

Now, with Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish new year, approaching later this month, and the restarting of the cycle of reading the weekly Torah portion a few weeks later, Rabbi Sacks' longtime Jerusalem-based publisher, Koren, is releasing a posthumously completed *Koren Shalem Humash*, with a new translation and insights to encourage deeper understanding of the Five Books of Moses.

Each spread features the words of the Humash in Hebrew — written in the clear Koren font, recognizable to users of the publisher's popular prayer books — on one side. On the other side there is a new, modern English translation that Sacks completed in 2018. Below there are two of the standard commentaries: from the 11th-century French rabbi Rashi and second-century sage Onkelos, who translated the Torah into Aramaic.

On the bottom half of the pages is Sacks' own commentary, which he began writing before his death, after which The Rabbi Sacks Legacy continued his work based on his writings and speeches.

The story of the *Koren Shalem Humash* begins in 2006, Joanna Benarroch, president of The Rabbi Sacks Legacy, told Jewish Insider last week. At that time, Sacks began working on his popular series of books about the weekly Torah portion, *Covenant and Conversation*.

"He started writing it online every week," Benarroch recalled. "He was the chief rabbi of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth, based in London, but he started to build a global audience."

Sacks' goals for *Covenant and Conversation* were "to make Torah relevant to us today, so it's not just wisdom from 2,000-3,000 years ago today, but wisdom we can also take with us. It was very important to him for us to be proud, knowledgeable Jews and to share that with the next generation ... to create new leaders who were proud, knowledgeable Jews. These were the things permeating his mind when he was writing," Benarroch said.

After Rabbi Sacks' death, Koren brought scholars, including the rabbi's niece, Jessica Sacks, to compile elements of *Covenant and Conversation*, his many other books, his BBC Radio "Thought for the Day" segments and other essays and speeches to complete Sacks' commentary on the Humash.

"The scholars beautifully weaved his ideas from each *parasha* [Torah portion] into detailed commentary," Benarroch said. "It's his words, very carefully crafted to give a whole picture of each *parasha*. The ideas are woven together in a way they had never before been [presented]. You have 15 years of writing and speaking on *Bereishit* [Genesis] crafted in this way."

In his Passover *Haggadah*, quoted in the editor's note of the Humash, Sacks wrote that "traditional commentaries are usually close readings of individual words and phrases rather than reflections on the meaning of the whole. That is a classic Jewish response and I have not hesitated to do likewise ... But it is the great themes, the overarching principles, that are often neglected or taken for granted."

Sacks' commentary combines both, in some places referring to specific words and phrases, and in others sharing insights on broader stories and ideas, which gives, Benarroch said, "an overview of what you can learn from the *parasha*. You're coming out with a clear understanding of what it is

about, with relevant ideas for today."

Benarroch recounted recently being in synagogue and sitting near a non-Jewish visitor who was reading along to the Torah portion in English.

"I was mortified, because it was a *parasha* that was quite difficult, with a lot of blood and gore," Benarroch said. "I wished at that point that the Rabbi Sacks Humash was available, because he would have given her a sense of what is going on and an understanding of the battles in the time of the Humash ... He wanted people to understand the whole picture, to read it as a narrative."

She paid tribute to Sacks' ability to "make very complicated things accessible."

In addition, the Humash features detailed references, such that if there is an idea a reader seeks to explore further, he or she can find the full essay, book or radio program it came from.

Benarroch worked for Sacks for 24 years, as executive director of the Office of the Chief Rabbi and then of his private office, and was key to establishing The Rabbi Sacks Legacy after his death. She said that the greatest lesson she's taken from him is the importance of listening to and learning from one another.

"He felt active listening was absolutely imperative for all of us. We talk a lot, but we don't listen enough," she said. "When he was writing his Humash, he felt he was connecting to God through it, and that for us to listen to the words and the messages, we must also listen closely to one another. Judaism is a religion of listening ... in terms of unity, community, being part of the Jewish people." ♦

Israeli President Isaac Herzog to present medal of honor to Dr. Miriam Adelson, 8 others

Other recipients are: Yossi Vardi, Sheikh Muwaffaq Tarif, Mathias Döpfner, George Costa Karra, Moti Malka, Dina Porat and Galila Ron-Feder Amit

By Judah Ari Gross

The article first appeared in eJewishPhilanthropy.

Israeli President Isaac Herzog will present the Israeli Presidential Medal of Honor to philanthropist Dr. Miriam Adelson, tech entrepreneur Yossi Vardi, Druze spiritual leader Sheikh Muwaffaq Tarif, German publisher Mathias Döpfner and five other recipients, his office announced on Sunday.

The other five recipients are: George Costa Karra, one of Israel's first Arab Supreme Court judges; Moti Malka, founder of the Israeli Andalusian Orchestra; Dr. Avi Ohry, an expert in rehabilitation; Dina

Porat, chief historian of Yad Vashem; and Galila Ron-Feder Amit, an Israeli author and journalist.

The Israeli Presidential Medal of Honor, which was created in 2012 by then-President Shimon Peres, is presented annually to recipients "who, by virtue of their skills, service or in any other way, have made an exceptional contribution to the State of Israel or to humanity." Last year, for the first time, all of the recipients lived outside of Israel, in recognition of the contributions of Diaspora Jews to the state.

The recipients were selected by an

advisory committee, which is chaired by retired Supreme Court Justice Professor Yoram Danziger. The medals will be presented at the President's Residence in Jerusalem later this year. The president called each of the recipients to inform them of their selection. "The State of Israel owes you profound gratitude for your work, for your uncompromising commitment to the values of excellence, solidarity, and innovation, and for your exceptional contribution to strengthening Israeli society and defending the State of Israel in the world," Herzog told each of the recipients. ♦

SEPTEMBER 2, 2025

Negotiations for next U.S.-Israel aid deal faces uphill battle with changing political tides

The next U.S.-Israel memorandum of understanding will need to be secured in a political environment much more hostile to Israel than 10 years ago

By Gabby Deutch

In September 2016, when President Barack Obama announced that the U.S. and Israel had signed a 10-year deal pledging a total of \$38 billion in military assistance to Israel, the news was generally uncontroversial and greeted with bipartisan plaudits — a striking contrast to the nasty presidential campaign playing out across the country at the time.

That deal, known as the U.S.-Israel Memorandum of Understanding, is now close to expiring, and the next one — if there is a next one — will be negotiated in an entirely different political environment. Israel remains deeply enmeshed in a nearly two-year war in Gaza, with little indication of an end in sight, making forward-looking negotiations more difficult.

A new MOU is not a given. U.S. support for Israel has dramatically declined on the left, and it is fracturing in isolationist corners of the right as well. Even some staunchly pro-Israel Republicans have grown wary of foreign aid in general, a shift that could affect U.S. policy toward Israel.

"When many of the threats that have faced Israel in the past have been largely neutralized, Israel will need to figure out how to make the case that it is in need of over half of the U.S. security assistance budget," a former Biden administration State Department official told *Jewish Insider*. "They will need to demonstrate the threats that they face in order to warrant this level of funding when Hamas has been decimated, when Hezbollah is a shadow of

what it once was, when Iranian air defenses are nonexistent and Israel has proven its ability to be able to infiltrate Iran."

The conversation about the next U.S.-Israel MOU came to the fore last month, when Pete Buttigieg, the former transportation secretary and a potential 2028 Democratic presidential candidate, became the first prominent Democrat to say the U.S. should not enact another 10-year military aid deal with Israel.

No other potential Democratic presidential contenders have weighed in on the issue, though it could become a litmus test for a party whose base is steadily turning more hostile to Israel.

The current U.S.-Israel MOU, which expires in 2028, is the countries' third.

President Bill Clinton and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak signed the first 10-year MOU in 1999. It was meant as a way to phase out U.S. economic aid to Israel, which Jerusalem no longer needed as an emerging economic and technological powerhouse. Another MOU was negotiated by President George W. Bush and completed in 2007.

“Ten-year MOUs have communicated an ongoing, consistent and bipartisan commitment to support Israel’s security by crossing administrations and demonstrating that it’s an ongoing relationship,” said former U.S. Ambassador to Israel Dan Shapiro. “It allows planning for big ticket acquisitions.”

The long-standing commitment allows Israel to plan to make large purchases that could take several years to acquire, such as fighter jets.

The MOU is not actually a binding agreement, it’s a framework. Congress must still approve the \$3.3 billion in military financing and \$500 million in missile defense laid out in the MOU each year during the annual appropriations process, and could do so even in the absence of an MOU.

“It’s simply a political commitment that Congress and the president can honor or not honor, and not having an MOU does not necessarily mean that we won’t have foreign military financing,” said Brad Bowman, an analyst at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and former national security advisor to Sen. Todd Young (R-IN).

“But if we’ve had MOUs with Israel for so long under presidents of both parties, to not have one, I think, would really be quite a political statement about what’s going on with Israel, and would undermine the efforts of both Americans and Israelis to do necessary planning,” Bowman added.

“Both the left and the right are having deep reservations about the U.S.-Israel relationship, and that could very much have negative consequences for the MOU,” a former Biden administration State Department official said.

Congress has in the past weighed in to signal its support for the MOU. In 2016, Congress voted overwhelmingly to endorse the new MOU, with 405 members of the

House voting for the measure. Just four representatives — all Republicans — voted against the bill. Only one of them, Rep. Thomas Massie (R-KY), is still in the House.

Since then, American support for Israel has shifted significantly, particularly since Israel’s response to the Oct. 7 Hamas attacks in 2023. A Quinnipiac poll released in August found that 60% of voters oppose sending more military aid to Israel for its war with Hamas, while only about one-third (32%) support it.

Meanwhile, only 13% of Democrats say their sympathies lie more with the Israelis than the Palestinians, a decline from 34% when asked the same question in November 2023. Far more Republicans side with the Israelis — 66% — but that’s down from 80% in November 2023.

“Both the left and the right are having deep reservations about the U.S.-Israel relationship, and that could very much have negative consequences for the MOU,” the former Biden State Department official said.

Congressional efforts to place conditions on American military aid to Israel have gained steam since Oct. 7.

Twenty-seven Senate Democrats voted last month on a resolution to block the shipment of certain weapons to Israel. The measure was largely symbolic and destined to fail in the Republican-led Senate. Still, even with an MOU, Congress would not be prevented from passing a bill further restricting U.S. aid to Israel.

“We continue to have an interest in ensuring that Israel can defend itself. They continue to be an important partner in the Middle East addressing many threats that threaten them, but also threaten us,” said former U.S. Ambassador to Israel Dan Shapiro. “If our relationship with Israel were to become far less supportive and far less intimately connected, we would quickly see a decline in our influence much more broadly in the region. That doesn’t mean we can’t also have critical conversations and use our leverage as a provider of assistance when we have concerns about Israeli military actions.”

That’s not considering the leeway given to the State Department, which approves arms sales. Last year, President Joe Biden held up a shipment of 2,000-pound bombs for months over concerns about Israel’s incursion into Rafah.

The Trump administration, which would be the one to negotiate and sign off on a new MOU before its expiration, has not yet indicated any reservations with the process.

Israel is by far the largest recipient of U.S. foreign military financing. The U.S. and Jordan have their own security MOU, though Jordan receives roughly a tenth of the annual military aid that Israel gets. Shapiro, the former U.S. ambassador to Israel, said the reason for the high level of support goes beyond Israel, and deep into the Middle East. He urged the U.S. to raise concerns with Israel about its conduct when issues arise, but not to cut into the aid itself.

“We continue to have an interest in ensuring that Israel can defend itself. They continue to be an important partner in the Middle East addressing many threats that threaten them, but also threaten us,” he said. “If our relationship with Israel were to become far less supportive and far less intimately connected, we would quickly see a decline in our influence much more broadly in the region. That doesn’t mean we can’t also have critical conversations and use our leverage as a provider of assistance when we have concerns about Israeli military actions.”

It would be tempting for Israel to try to increase its defense production to account for such a turbulent political environment. Israel has grown its military exports substantially in recent years and some Israeli lawmakers have indicated they’d like to phase out reliance on U.S. aid, but it would be very difficult for Israel to domestically produce everything it needs.

“The problem is that’s never going to happen,” Bowman said. “Israel, as impressive as it is, is never going to be completely self-sufficient in producing its own weapon systems. The United States is not. If we’re not, Israel never will be. Israel is a technology superpower. It’s not an industrial superpower.” ♦

Jewish orgs urge institutions to apply for NSGP grants, despite questions about new conditions

Some in the Jewish community are raising concerns that grants may be contingent on cooperation with immigration authorities and eliminating diversity, equity and inclusion programs

By Marc Rod

A series of Jewish community groups, in a joint statement released on Tuesday, urged Jewish organizations to apply for Nonprofit Security Grant Program funding, in spite of ongoing concerns from some in the community about potential new conditions on the funding.

Some in the Jewish community have raised concerns and expressed confusion about language present in some NSGP application materials indicating that grants may be contingent on cooperating with immigration enforcement efforts and eliminating diversity, equity and inclusion programming. The Federal Emergency

Management Agency did not respond to a request for comment.

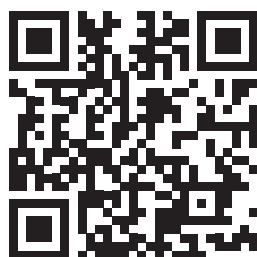
“While we are aware that questions have arisen on the part of certain religious institutions regarding the current year’s program criteria, our organizations strongly urge all eligible institutions to apply for this critical resource,” the Jewish Federations of North America, Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, Anti-Defamation League, Secure Community Network, Community Security Initiative and Community Security Service said in a joint statement.

The groups called the NSGP “an essential lifeline for all synagogues,

schools, community centers, and other community institutions, regardless of their denomination” in light of “unprecedented threats to our communal security.”

The groups said they have been “in regular contact with government officials who have affirmed their continued commitment to protecting the safety of all faith-based institutions and the values they hold.”

They also urged organizations with further questions to contact the state-level agencies responsible for administering the NSGP grants. ♦



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