

THE WEEKLY PRINT

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OCTOBER 6, 2025

How Oct. 7 changed the world — two years later

Five reflections on how Oct. 7 reshaped politics, diplomacy, advocacy, higher ed, and Jewish life

By Gabby Deutch

When the world woke up two years ago to news of a vicious, widescale terror attack taking place across southern Israel, it was immediately clear that this was different from past periodic bursts of violence near the Gaza Strip. But we could not yet fathom the massive changes that would soon reverberate around the world.

As negotiators now appear close to a deal to release the hostages and end the war, the Middle East will not return to the pre-Oct. 7 status quo. Nor will American society. The changes wrought by the events of that day will linger long after the last bullet is fired.

On Oct. 7, Hamas terrorists killed 1,200 people, took more than 250 hostages and launched a war that has upended the Middle East, fundamentally altered global politics and culture and reshaped the Jewish community.

Anti-Israel activists descended into the streets of Manhattan one day after the attacks, celebrating with chants of “resistance is justified when people are occupied.” Students at America’s top universities signed onto letters blaming

Israel for the bloodshed. Jews looked on with alarm: At our moment of greatest need, this is the response?

Two years later, *Jewish Insider* is reflecting on all that has changed since the Oct. 7 attacks. Iran has been weakened and Hezbollah decapitated, while a degraded Hamas, not yet defeated, fights on in Gaza, where tens of thousands have been killed and a humanitarian crisis persists. The U.S.-Israel alliance has come under strain from growing forces on the far left and right who wish to see an end to American military support for Israel. A vast anti-Israel protest movement swept across college campuses, presenting university leaders with a test — how to balance freedom of expression with protecting Jewish students — that many failed.

Yet despite the myriad challenges that have emerged from this war, Jews around the world were instilled with a new sense of pride in defense of Jewish peoplehood. More people are going to synagogue and celebrating Jewish holidays now than before Oct. 7. Judaica sales spiked as people yearned to represent their faith proudly,

even as antisemitism surged around the world.

To mark the second anniversary of this solemn day, we are publishing a special project examining five key areas that have been utterly transformed by Oct. 7 and its aftermath: American politics, the U.S.-Israel relationship, higher education, Jewish advocacy and Israel’s relations with the world. We asked dozens of leading thinkers and practitioners to offer their thoughts on the biggest changes that have taken place in Jewish life over the last two years.

You’ll hear from Democratic and Republican lawmakers; officials who served under Presidents Trump, Biden, Obama and Bush; rabbis and writers; Europeans, Americans and Israelis; and activists and philanthropists. You’ll find optimism, frustration and everything in between. We are all still experiencing the ripple effects left in the wake of that indescribable day, even as an end to the war may yet be in sight. We hope these insights help you reflect on the world in which we now live. ♦

How Oct. 7 reshaped American politics

To mark the second anniversary of the Oct. 7 attacks in Israel, the Jewish Insider team asked leading thinkers and practitioners to reflect on how that day has changed the world. Here, we look at how Oct. 7 changed American Politics

By Matthew Kassel

If Israel had been deployed as a political football long before Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attacks, the aftermath of the violence and the ensuing war in Gaza only ensured that it would become one of the most contentious subjects of debate in American governance and elections.

In a moment of ever increasing extremes, the fallout from Oct. 7 exposed festering divisions over Israel on both sides of the

aisle. As a result, many Jewish Democrats now report feeling politically homeless as the anti-Zionist far left has gained traction and as room for nuanced discussion of the conflict has dwindled. Republicans, meanwhile, are confronting a younger base in thrall to conspiracy theorists who use their opposition to Israel as a cover for espousing antisemitic beliefs — fueling accusations that the GOP has failed to police

its ranks.

As polling has recently demonstrated a sharp decline in sympathy for Israel in the wake of the attacks, underscoring a new level of skepticism or outright hostility toward the Jewish state, it remains to be seen how such views will ultimately shape the direction of both parties in the upcoming election cycle and beyond. ♦

Abe Foxman

Former longtime national director of the Anti-Defamation League

"Oct. 7 — followed by the Gaza war, Netanyahu as prime minister and the reelection of [President Donald] Trump — came together to change the political landscape for Israel and the American Jewish community. Democrats who traditionally stood firm with Israel began to distance themselves from Israel as the Gaza war escalated. Republicans, traditionally less supportive of Israel pre-Oct. 7 and by nature isolationist, are today the major supporters of Israel and Jewish issues — but most of this is totally dependent on President Trump's support of Israel. All political conventions of advocacy and predictability have been shattered. And political bipartisanship, which served Israel and the American Jewish community, looks dead for the foreseeable future."

Eileen Filler-Corn

Democratic former speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates

"Since Oct. 7, antisemitism has not just risen, it is out of control, with far too many feeling emboldened to publish and promote it under the cover of anti-Zionism. This is a dangerous moment in time, and it makes it all the more urgent to shine a light on the hate and call it out, wherever it surfaces and whomever spreads it."

James Kirchick

Global reporter for Axel Springer and writer at large, Air Mail

"In the post-Oct. 7 political world, progressive supporters of Israel find themselves increasingly unwelcome on the left. In progressive spaces, Zionism is a dirty word akin to 'Nazism' and those who consider themselves Zionists are being shown the door. Though this anti-Zionist litmus test has yet to be imposed by the Democratic Party on a national scale, the success of Zohran Mamdani [in New York] augurs a future in which support for Israel's existence as a Jewish state will be incompatible with progressive politics."

Former Rep. Steve Israel (D-NY)

Former chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee

"Oct. 7 ignited a monumental shift in American politics, and also revealed deeply troubling levels of hypocrisy. Whether one agrees or disagrees with the strategic and tactical military decisions Israel has made in Gaza, it galvanized, organized and energized opposition on college campuses, streets and even in Congress. At the same time, it exposed in too many activists a double standard that tolerated silence when Jews were massacred on Oct. 7, but fury when they defended the right to safety in the aftermath. The question is whether the shift is permanent or transitory."

Brian Romick

President and CEO of Democratic Majority for Israel

“The horrors of Oct. 7 and the subsequent surge in antisemitism have been a wake-up call for so many American Jews and allied pro-Israel Americans. We immediately recognized the critical need to deepen pro-Israel political engagement and advocacy work to ensure Israel’s security, strengthen the U.S.-Israel relationship and combat antisemitism. There is no question that this is a serious moment in the U.S.-Israel relationship. Yet the fundamentals of our party’s support for Israel are strong because they are grounded in shared democratic values, mutual security interests and they have endured for more than 75 years.”

Danielle Pletka

Distinguished senior fellow in foreign and defense policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute

“The challenge we face in 2025 is the explosion of intersectionality in politics and antisemitism. As extremists have risen, mostly on the left, but with growing pockets on the right as well, antisemitism is no longer the purview of university Middle East departments, but a core element of critical race theory, Marxism, anti-capitalism, pro-trans extremism and pro-choice illiberalism on the left, as well as for the rabid populist, anti-immigrant, anti-elite, anti-government pitchfork wielders of the right. Worse still, the traditional tools historically instrumental in moderating and educating, Congress and the press are experiencing a self-inflicted bankruptcy that makes solutions ever more elusive.”

Shelley Greenspan

Former White House liaison to the Jewish community, 2022-2025

“Oct. 7 marked a profound rupture, not only in Israel’s security, but in the American Jewish consciousness. The boundary between global and domestic antisemitism dissolved almost overnight, leaving our community shaken and exposed. In that moment, many instinctively turned to political leaders and public institutions for moral clarity and protection. But what followed was in many cases a sobering disappointment — too many voices, on both sides of the aisle, equivocated or fell silent when we needed them most. We were reminded that we cannot afford to place our faith solely in others to stand up for us. If each of us finds the courage to speak out and show up, the burden of moral leadership becomes collective – and far more powerful. That, perhaps, is one of the clearest lessons in the wake of Oct. 7.”

John Podhoretz

Editor of Commentary magazine

“The aftermath of Oct. 7 in the United States has proven to be the most depressingly instructive political period of my six-decade lifetime. Here’s what we learned, or what was revealed to us, that we had failed to see coming: Two decades of grassroots organizing among America’s educated youth, paid for with seed money from progressive foundations, NGOs and the Islamist nation of Qatar, had created an entire subculture of activist antisemitic protest that was immediately pulled off the shelf and instantly deployed against Israel and the Jews. And the increasingly secular, increasingly intersectional and increasingly violence-excusing Democratic Party had no antibodies whatsoever to fight off this monstrous disease.”

Susie Stern

Board chair of Jewish Democratic Council of America

“The aftermath of Oct. 7 on our community has been all-consuming and incredibly agonizing. We are torn apart by what Yossi Klein Halevi calls two conflicting certainties. What happened on Oct. 7 was horrific, and Israel has the right to defend itself from Hamas and any other threat. At the same time, as Jews, we cannot look away from the pain and suffering of those in Gaza. Immediately following Oct. 7, we were comforted by President Biden, who offered unprecedented support of Israel and the Jewish people. Two years later, our hearts are shattered knowing hostages are still being held in horrific conditions, and there is a humanitarian crisis in Gaza. We need inspired leadership to bring the hostages home and bring this war to end, and hope the plan presented will succeed.”

Sen. Katie Britt (R-AL)

Alabama Senator

“Oct. 7 is a day that will live in infamy as one of the greatest attacks on the Jewish people in modern history. The world has changed since that tragic day, particularly the course of American politics. It has never been clearer who stands on the side of Israel’s freedom and safety, and I believe that sentiment rests solidly with conservatives across America.”

Ilan Goldenberg

Jewish outreach director, 2024 Kamala Harris presidential campaign

“Oct. 7 and the war in Gaza have turned the Israeli-Palestinian conflict into a foreign policy issue with much more resonance in the United States. As usual in these moments, the loudest voices have been those on the extremes calling for either a blank check for the Netanyahu government or immediately accusing Israel of wrongdoing as early as Oct. 8. But what I found on the presidential campaign was that most American Jews and most voters don’t subscribe to either of the extremes, and the silent majority is able to hold two truths at the same time: that Israel has a right to exist as a secure, democratic, Jewish state, and that Palestinians also deserve their rights to freedom, security and self-determination.”

Nachama Soloveichik

Former communications director for Nikki Haley’s 2024 presidential campaign

“Oct. 7 exposed the antisemitic rot in the Democratic Party’s mainstream. This new antisemitism will set the stage for the 2028 Democratic presidential primary, and American Jews, largely liberals, will be forced to reckon with their political homelessness.”

Former Sen. Norm Coleman (R-MN)

National chairman of the Republican Jewish Coalition

“Among the most significant changes in American politics directly flowing from the carnage of Oct. 7 and Israel’s efforts to destroy Hamas has been [that] support for Israel is now part of the partisan divide. Simply put, Democrats support the Palestinians over Israel (59-21). Republicans support Israel over Palestinians (75-10). Gallup calls the 50-point partisan divide the largest it’s ever polled. And much of this is attributable to social media — young people get their news from TikTok — and they are flooded with anti-Israel, antisemitic positions. ‘The medium is the message’ — and Startup Nation needs to figure out how to change the social media narrative if they hope to maintain U.S. support for Israel.”

Eric Levine

Republican fundraiser and attorney

“The modern Democratic Party no longer exists. It is officially the antisemitic Democratic Socialists of America Party with a cowed minority traditional Democratic wing. Bernie Sanders, AOC, Zohran Mamdani and their fellow comrades-in-arms now represent the ideological core of the party.”

Kenneth Baer

Democratic strategist and former associate director at the White House Office of Management and Budget, 2009-2012

“Betrayal — the sense that the progressive coalition in and around the Democratic Party has abandoned Jewish Americans — is one of the most significant political developments since Oct. 7. This is especially the case among those middle-aged and older who are most likely to be involved in Jewish institutions and most inclined to give to causes and candidates. And as we see antisemitism surge among the far right, this too could become a trend on the other side of the aisle.”

Norm Eisen

Brookings Institution senior fellow and former U.S. ambassador to the Czech Republic

“The horrific Hamas attack of Oct. 7 and its aftermath weigh on the minds of Americans two years later. Many Americans want to see the terrorists held accountable and a return of Israeli hostages — and also support a ceasefire and an end to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Without a resolution, Israel faces growing American concerns (mirroring those held by Israelis themselves) about the policies of the current government.”

Andrew Weinstein

Democratic fundraiser and former U.S. public delegate to the United Nations

“The most profound shift since Oct. 7 has been the great unmooring of American Jewish political life, where foundational assumptions about allies and ideological homes have been shattered. Previously reliable political sanctuaries have become contested spaces, and hallowed institutions of memory and learning are being weaponized for partisan gain. The landscape is now defined by a transactional approach to combating hate, where condemnations are often conditioned on partisan advantage. This has created a toxic environment where antisemitism from one’s own political allies is excused or ignored, making a unified and effective response nearly impossible. As a result, we are forced into a painful, but necessary, re-evaluation of how we build coalitions and secure our community in an increasingly fractured world.”

Sen. Kevin Cramer (R-ND)

North Dakota Senator

“I am hard to surprise, but I have been shocked at how deep antisemitism runs in the United States. It is in institutions, as well as the hearts of too many Americans. Some of it is generational, but much of it has been taught in recent decades. We have to commit to reversing this bigotry wherever it exists.”

Rachel Fish

Educator and special advisor, Brandeis University Presidential Initiative to Counter Antisemitism in Higher Education

“First and foremost, we are seeing a serious shift in the American political landscape across the political spectrum and observing in real time how Israel and Jews have become wedge issues within political conservative and liberal camps, and Israel and Jews are used as political footballs. American Jews can no longer take for granted or assume that political leaders desire to see a strong U.S.-Israel relationship. Secondly, we are living in a society in which younger Americans, between the ages of 18-24 years of age (Harvard/Harris Aug. 2025 poll), are more supportive of Hamas than Israel. ... This should concern not only Jews but all Americans who care about democracy and liberal values. Thirdly, Israelis, despite the real and present dangers they are experiencing since Oct. 7, are deeply concerned about American Jews due to our increasing exposure to antisemitic sentiment, behaviors, and targeted acts.”

Brian Katulis

Senior fellow at the Middle East Institute

“The biggest impact that Oct. 7 and its aftermath had on U.S. politics is that it accelerated the divisions and fragmentation between and within the two main political parties on national security overall, especially on U.S.-Israel relations. Democrats suffered from major divisions within their ranks, and activists on the far left demonstrated that they would rather risk a second Trump presidency in an effort to spotlight their positions, no matter the actual consequences of a second Trump presidency on America as a country or Palestinians as a people. The GOP allowed a more right-wing extremist wing that opposes traditional views like a two-state solution to the conflict to gain even greater dominance under Trump 2.0. These domestic divisions on U.S. foreign policy are exploited every day by America’s main adversaries and competitors like China, Russia and Iran.”

Steve Sheffey

Pro-Israel Democratic activist and commentator

“Oct. 7 was followed by an outpouring of bipartisan support for Israel, including President Biden’s visit to Israel 11 days later and his unprecedented \$14 billion aid package to Israel. Support for Israel has not eroded, but Netanyahu’s conduct of the war, including the starvation and killing of civilians in Gaza, along with his threats to annex the West Bank and his toleration of settler violence, have led many, especially in the Democratic Party, to distinguish between support for Israel and support for Netanyahu’s policies. In addition to advocating for Israel’s safety and security, ‘pro-Israel’ now means opposing Netanyahu and siding with Israelis who prioritize ending the war, releasing all the hostages and, ultimately, a two-state solution to ensure Israel’s future as a Jewish, democratic state.”

How Oct. 7 upended higher education

To mark the second anniversary of the Oct. 7 attacks in Israel, the Jewish Insider team asked leading thinkers and practitioners to reflect on how that day has changed the world. Here, we look at how Oct. 7 changed higher education

By Gabby Deutch

For decades, American Jews have held academia in the highest esteem, viewing the university as the pathway to knowledge and success. Quotas on Jewish enrollment that lasted into the early 1960s tested that deeply held belief. But nothing has strained Jewish faith in higher education more than the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attacks on Israel and their aftermath, which ushered in a widespread anti-Israel activist movement on campuses that resulted in Jewish students facing ostracism, bullying and at times violence.

Just one day after Hamas' attack, a letter signed by three dozen student groups at Harvard held Israel "entirely responsible" for the violence — and set the tone for the targeting of Israel, and Jewish students who

refused to disavow the Jewish state, that would become de rigueur at many higher education institutions in the months to come.

Chants of "globalize the intifada" were soon commonplace on campus quads, which in the spring of 2024 played host to raucous, and sometimes violent, anti-Israel encampments. In some of the highest echelons of American higher education, including Columbia and Stanford, students stormed and vandalized buildings.

This groundswell of anti-Israel activism seemed to catch university administrators by surprise. University presidents struggled to discipline rulebreakers and, in the process, earned the ire of Congress. After the presidents of the University of Pennsylvania

and Harvard, testifying on Capitol Hill in December 2023, infamously struggled to answer Rep. Elise Stefanik's (R-NY) question about whether calls for the genocide of Jews violated school policy, both resigned within weeks, setting the stage for a broader wave of resignations of university presidents.

As the war dragged on, campuses got quieter. Students have moved on to other issues. Partly due to pressure from the Trump administration, universities became more serious about cracking down on campus antisemitism. Some Jewish students have abandoned elite universities in the Northeast for friendlier territory in the South and Midwest. American Jews' love affair with many institutions of higher education has been irreparably damaged. ♦

Deborah Lipstadt

Former U.S. special envoy for monitoring and combating antisemitism, 2022-2025

"There is bad news and good. The bad news: On many campuses, the encampments were accompanied by expressions of overt antisemitism. Not condemnation of Israel. Overt antisemitism. The good news: Administrators, who had previously not taken antisemitism seriously, have begun to recognize that this Jew hatred is affecting the lives of their Jewish students and have begun to act, sometimes because of external governmental pressure and sometimes without it. Bad news: On many campuses, the fight against antisemitism is being dismissed as a political ploy and a subterfuge to attack elite institutions. And so, the cycle continues."

Adam Lehman

President and CEO of Hillel International

"Since Oct. 7, we've seen two big changes in campus life: First, of course there was a significant rise in antisemitic incidents on campus, with over 2,000 antisemitic incidents during the 2024-2025 school year. And second, we've tracked a record-setting level of Jewish student engagement: Jewish students are looking for places where they feel like they belong, where they're not just safe, but where they can also express their Jewish identities with pride, joy and confidence."

Daniel Diermeier

Chancellor of Vanderbilt University

"One important and welcome change is the dozens of universities that have adopted institutional neutrality, the practice of not taking positions on social or political issues unrelated to the direct functioning of the university. More of these schools need to extend that policy to not taking positions through actions like divestment and boycotts, but we are seeing movement in the right direction."

Eitan Hersh

Professor of political science at Tufts University and inaugural director of Tufts' Center for Expanding Viewpoints in Higher Education

"The aftermath of Oct. 7 revealed an unhealthy civic culture across many universities. Since then, schools have been working hard, figuring out how to rekindle a spirit of intellectual life on campuses where people with different worldviews can learn together, learn from one another, respectfully disagree, and in the process grow as scholars and citizens."

Pamela Nadell

American University professor and author of Antisemitism, an American Tradition

"Stunned by Oct. 7's outburst of hate against college students, media outlets overlooked what Jewish faculty were facing. Colleagues we had known for decades shunned us. Students denounced our research as complicit in stealing Palestinian land and promoting ethnic cleansing. As some Jewish studies faculty, including me, watched enrollments in our customarily oversubscribed Holocaust classes plummet, we wondered: 'Were we being boycotted?'"

Former Sen. Ben Sasse (R-NE)

Past president of the University of Florida

"The 'emperor has no clothes' doesn't come close to describing what's happening around the public's growing distrust of higher education. Scolding moralists without any morals exposed the rot at the heart of many humanities departments that have taken over so many institutions: As professors excused rape, murder and atrocities with academic jargon, the broader public woke up to the fact that much of non-STEM education has gone completely off the rails. The challenge now will be to rebuild on a stable foundation, rather than merely lament or rage."

Greg Lukianoff

President of the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression

"The horrific events of Oct. 7, 2023, and their fallout across American college campuses — including months of encampments and, in some cases, violent protests — revealed just how ill-equipped university leaders were to grapple with both the widespread antisemitism and the free speech crisis in higher education. The testimony of college presidents before Congress exposed the hypocrisy of institutions that had spoken loudly on countless issues facing certain minority groups but couldn't muster a response, or at best insisted on nuance or 'context,' when it came to the concerns of Jewish students. In retrospect, it was a turning point in recognizing the urgent need for institutional neutrality and consistent protection of free speech and academic freedom."

David Bernstein

Founder and CEO of the North American Values Institute

"Since Oct. 7, I have spoken in Jewish communities across the country, and have been impressed that most rank-and-file Jews now have an appreciation of the ideological roots of antisemitism on the left. Many of these people once took for granted that their safety as Jews depended on the left's success in American politics. They saw the threat to American Jewish life coming from one direction only. Today, our community is less innocent and much more clear eyed about the nature of the threats we face than we were before Oct. 7."

Catherine Lhamon

Former assistant secretary of education for civil rights, 2021-2025

"The proliferation of reported hate incidents on college and university campuses following Oct. 7 both lowlighted how ready communities are to target hate toward community members and reflected a shocking underappreciation of campus community responsibilities to protect against discrimination. The visibility of these two phenomena cry out for correction so school communities can engage and thrive as we expect and as federal law guarantees. I have been grateful to witness the many campus communities who have come together to grow and redress past injury, and I ache for students, faculty and staff who have had to live the hate made visible in their college and work experience. I deeply regret the degree to which this very real and very important issue is today weaponized in the federal government in ways that distract from the real need to heal and correct, to ensure that all persons in all schools can learn, work and thrive without discrimination the law forbids."

Ora Pescovitz

President of Oakland University in Michigan

“Since Oct. 7, tensions on American campuses have become both more overt and more subtle. Overtly, campus discourse — exacerbated by social media — has become more contentious overall. Antisemitism is now more widely recognized, but it has been accompanied by greater criticism of Israel and anti-Zionism. Antisemitism has also been used by the federal administration as a pretext to withdraw university research funding and attack academic freedom. This is dangerous and risks turning Jews into scapegoats. Finally, and more subtly, too many universities have left hostile rhetoric unchecked, adopting institutional neutrality rather than providing the moral leadership and clarity this moment demands.”

Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-NY)

NY representative

“Oct. 7 exposed not only an explosion of antisemitism on our college campuses, but also a deeper moral rot, a collapse of critical thinking, intellectual rigor, and moral clarity at our supposed best and brightest institutions of learning in this country. My question from the infamous hearing with university presidents was the most watched testimony in the history of the United States Congress, with over one billion views in one week and now into the multiple billions. My straightforward moral question: ‘Does calling for the genocide of Jews violate your university’s code of conduct on bullying or harassment?’ led to the unmasking of failed moral leadership at the highest levels of our most prestigious universities who answered, ‘It depends on the context.’ The world heard that. This hearing led to an earthquake within higher education that was long overdue. For decades, the American people witnessed elite institutions embrace dangerous radical groupthink, eerily reminiscent of the ideological decay that predated atrocities in the 20th century, and it has become clear that our higher education system was in urgent need of a reckoning. Faculty who once championed free thinking have become apologists and often enablers of hate, while unchecked foreign funding has fueled the spread of radical anti-American, anti-West ideologies.”

Rabbi David Wolpe

Rabbi emeritus at Sinai Temple in Los Angeles and former visiting professor at Harvard Divinity School

“Oct. 7 was an unmasking: The expression of hatred of Israel and hostility to Jews, especially on elite campuses, was volcanic. It uncovered years of ideological indoctrination and spurred Americans to recognize how much of higher ed was teaching our most privileged to disdain the culture that bred and nurtured them.”

Rabbi Ari Berman

President of Yeshiva University

“On Oct. 7, the battle for the soul of the American university was unveiled in its full light. On one side: voices of hatred and antisemitism, rejecting the moral foundations of Western civilization. On the other: a yearning for meaning, community and purpose — rooted in the American story and nourished by its biblical foundations. While some of the troubled campuses have begun to adjust due to the accountability imposed by the Administration, the deeper struggle is cultural and moral — and its outcome will shape the future of our nation. In this defining moment, the role of Yeshiva University — its educators, students and all who cherish America’s moral heritage — is not only to oppose hatred, but to illuminate a higher path. And this is what I have seen from our students and so many others throughout the country. What was meant to silence Jewish voices has instead sparked a nationwide awakening — one in which Jewish students are embracing their identity and projecting their values with courage and conviction to the benefit of all.”

Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC)

North Carolina representative

“Corrosive antisemitism that had been present on university campuses for a long time manifested itself in a disgraceful and disgusting manner following Oct. 7. The investigations I launched into schools that capitulated to terroristic mobs helped expose this moral rot in a spectacular way — the truth was laid bare for all to see. Invertebrate administrators who roost within academia, and who failed to confront this abhorrent rise of antisemitism, will face judgement in due course — I’m still fighting to hold them accountable.”

Kenneth Marcus

Founder of, Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law and former assistant secretary of education for civil rights, 2018-2020

“Oct 7 was a brutal attack, and the next day hit Jewish Americans even harder, as college campuses lit up with anti-Israel and pro-Hamas fervor, laying bare a terrifying level of antisemitism baked into higher education. And that hate does not stay confined within campus borders — it spills into our communities, our workplaces and our public spaces. Two years later, some remain stuck in denial or crushed by despair, when this crisis is screaming for bold, relentless action. We can’t sit still, can’t wait, and can’t retreat from America’s leading universities; the moment calls on us to fight back hard, to turn the memory of Oct. 7 into fuel for the battle and to take back every campus that we have lost.”

OCTOBER 6, 2025

How Oct. 7 transformed Israel’s relations with the world

To mark the second anniversary of the Oct. 7 attacks in Israel, the Jewish Insider team asked leading thinkers and practitioners to reflect on how that day has changed the world. Here, we look at how Oct. 7 changed Israel’s relations with the world

By Lahav Harkov

Soon after Oct. 7, the outpouring of support for Israel from many corners of the world was heartwarming. But subsequent events have seemingly illustrated that, as novelist Dara Horn aptly wrote, people love dead Jews. The Jews who fight back? Less so.

Immediately after the deadliest day for Jewish people since the Holocaust, most of the Arab and Muslim world had little sympathy for the victims of the Oct. 7 attacks and was more worried about what Israel

would do in response; Russia and China responded similarly. Weeks later, members of the European Union were accusing Israel of “indiscriminate killing.” Many countries have stopped arms sales to Israel. Two years later, the European Commission is considering suspending free trade with the Jewish state.

Yet there are a few bright spots. Israel’s relations with Abraham Accords countries remain, and the UAE has been a partner in finding constructive solutions for the

day after in Gaza. On the heels of Israel’s attack on Iran’s nuclear program, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said that Israel is doing the world’s “dirty work,” and Argentina’s president, Javier Milei, remains an enthusiastic supporter of Israel. Most significantly, the Trump administration continues to tell Israel it can “do what [it has] to do,” despite growing anti-Israel sentiment in the U.S. ♦

Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC)

South Carolina Senator

“There is the Middle East before Oct. 7 and there is the Middle East after Oct. 7. The attack was motivated by a desire to stop normalization between Saudi Arabia and Israel — which was close to being realized — building on the Abraham Accords. The biggest change is that support for the two-state solution is at an all-time low in Israel and the animosity toward Israel on the Arab streets is at an all-time high. It is imperative that not only Hamas, but also Hezbollah, be eliminated before we can expect Israel to go back to the table in the same manner as before. Because of the Oct. 7 attacks, until all Iranian proxies of significance are contained, the first steps on the path toward normalization cannot be taken.”

Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL)

Co-chair of the House Abraham Accords Caucus

“The two-year aftermath of the nightmare of Oct. 7 posed constant challenges to the Abraham Accords, threatened progress toward normalization with Israel and demonstrated why these efforts are so important. Diplomacy freed more than 100 hostages from Hamas captivity. Security cooperation between Israel and Arab nations helped protect American servicemembers and vessels from terror, while Iran and its proxies are weaker than at any time in recent memory. Clearly, while ensuring that Hamas is fully removed from Gaza is essential, commitment and investments to broaden and deepen the Abraham Accords are still the best path toward lasting peace.”

Nikki Haley

Former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations

“Lost in the focus on the painfully long war in Gaza is the vast improvement in Israel’s regional security since Oct. 7. The Iranian nuclear program is badly damaged, Hezbollah is largely destroyed, Hamas is functionally dead and the Assad regime is gone. Israel is wise to stay strong despite the world preferring it be weak.”

Dan Shapiro

Former U.S. ambassador to Israel and senior Biden administration official

“The atrocities of Oct. 7, and the participation of Iran and its terrorist proxies in the war that followed, actually reinforced the logic of the Abraham Accords and regional integration: namely, that a coalition of forward-looking, U.S.-aligned moderates wants a better region of peace, prosperity and cooperation, and they are resisted by an axis of extremists who want war, terror and destruction. When the war ends, with the Iranian axis gravely weakened, it should be possible to resume the work of integration, and bring in new partners like Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Syria and Indonesia, with support from the United States, Europe and India.

“But Arab states who previously were willing to look past the Palestinian issue now insist on a credible path to a Palestinian state. That poses a huge challenge to Israeli society, which seeks integration but is understandably not ready to envision a Palestinian state while Hamas still holds hostages, and while the nightmare of another Oct. 7 does not seem impossible, including from the West Bank. Finding a way to square this circle may be required for Israelis and Palestinians to achieve a better future, and for Israel to find its way out of the rising wave of international isolation that is affecting the lives of its citizens.”

Rep. Brad Schneider (D-IL)

Member of Congress representing Illinois’ 10th Congressional District

“Oct. 7 showed the world exactly what Iran-backed Hamas is: a nihilistic, genocidal terrorist organization determined to eliminate Israel and kill Jews anywhere, at any cost. Though the horrific war that followed Oct. 7 has divided the world, our nation and our communities in many ways, I am hopeful that, with the Arab nations, Europe, the U.S. and Israel (and hopefully Hamas) all supporting a common plan to end the war and rebuild Gaza, the world can now unite around a shared vision for a more just, peaceful, and prosperous Middle East, building on the promise of the Abraham Accords.”

Meir Ben-Shabbat

Former Israeli national security advisor and head of the Misgav Institute for National Security and Zionist Strategy

“The Oct. 7 attack was the most-documented terror attack in human history. ... The documentation gave the world clear proof of what happened and a reminder that the ideas, the evil and the cruelty of the Nazis is still here, even if it is under a different guise. Hitler’s book *Mein Kampf* was found in homes in the Gaza Strip that were raided by IDF soldiers during the war, only strengthening this connection. The world forgets quickly. Some even deny it, audaciously accusing Israel, the victim of the atrocities, of committing war crimes. German Chancellor Freidrich Merz may have said a few months ago that ‘Israel is doing the dirty work for all of us’ about Israel’s attack on Iran during Operation Rising Lion, but his words are true about Israel’s war in Gaza.

“The Oct. 7 attack is a reminder that monstrous evil still exists among us and it requires countries that want to live to always remember this. Words are not enough, they must act unceasingly to fight it. The enlightened world must examine international war that is meant to protect from atrocities so that it is not used to protect terror and those who commit atrocities against civilians.”

Emilie Moatti

Hostages and Missing Families Forum diplomatic team member and former Labor MK in Israel

“Oct. 7 was the greatest disaster that happened to the State of Israel and the Jewish people since the Holocaust. It was a biblical-level disaster. It was also a watershed moment for Israel’s policies over the years that stemmed from the assumption that the conflict could be managed, that its greatest enemies could be silenced with money and quiet could be bought. This paradigm was totally disproven. The best act for security is to strengthen moderate forces, eradicate terror groups and create an appropriate regional alternative that will protect the security and interests of the State of Israel and bring the region to grow and flourish.”

Mark Dubowitz

CEO, Foundation for Defense of Democracies

“Israel lives on a split screen: to the east, and specifically the Middle East, it has reasserted overwhelming military and intelligence dominance, making clear that no terrorist or regime complicit in Oct. 7 has immunity. To the west, however, Hamas and its often Qatari-funded enablers in the U.N., academia, media and NGOs have recast Israel as [a] pariah and flipped the narrative. A new generation of Israelis — warriors, innovators and builders — must now take the political reins to secure Israel’s strength abroad while retaining its unmatched power in the Middle East.”

Robert Satloff

Executive director, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy

“Israel has certainly won all the key battles since Oct. 7 but given that war is, as Clausewitz explained, politics by other means, it is too early to tell who the victor really is. Israel as Sparta was never the Zionist dream; despite repeated defeats by Hamas and other elements of the Iran threat network, Israel’s enemies have made great strides toward turning the Jewish state into an isolated, hyper-militarized island in a sea of rancor and animosity. But two years after Oct. 7, their success — their victory — is by no means assured. If Israel can marry its tactical prowess with so-far-missing strategic vision, then peace, security and regional integration remain within its grasp. Hopefully, the Trump peace plan gives Israel the opportunity to do just that.”

Leah Soibel

Founder and CEO, Fuente Latina

“One of the clearest lessons since Oct. 7 is that hasbara is obsolete. When our story doesn’t connect, bad actors hijack our lived experiences for their own purposes, and the world believes them. In the past two years, by engaging thousands of Spanish-speaking journalists in the U.S. and globally, Fuente Latina has proven that authentic, culturally fluent storytellers move audiences and shape reality across the Hispanic world. On the global stage, it can feel like we stand alone as some leaders hide behind virtue signaling. Yet we do have allies, and anyone committed to strengthening these bonds must communicate strategically beyond the echo chamber. There is repair work ahead, but the next chapter of our story is ours to proudly narrate, not merely ‘explain.’”

Rabbi Ammiel Hirsch

Senior rabbi of Stephen Wise Free Synagogue in New York City

“Historians might look back and mark Oct. 7 as the day that could have been. With all of the devastation and destruction, it might have been catastrophically worse. What would have happened had the entire Iranian ring of fire, meticulously and patiently constructed over 20 years, attacked all at once and from every direction: Hamas in Gaza, Hamas in the West Bank, Hezbollah from the north, joined by jihadis from Syria — all under the cover of hundreds of Iranian ballistic missiles raining down from the east on both civilian and military targets? Israel might have been overwhelmed. At the very least, tens of thousands would have been killed, and hundreds more kidnapped to Lebanon. This is the context that will shape my thinking for the rest of my life. Oct. 7 upended decades of my assumptions and humbled me. It has reoriented my approach to American Jewish leadership and redefined my sense of responsibility to the Jewish community. Oct. 7 forever changed Jewish history. The repercussions for Israelis and world Jewry will radiate for decades to come.”

Meredith Jacobs

CEO, Jewish Women International

“Oct. 7 introduced us to the horrors of the use of rape as a weapon of war. But while we understand that instances of conflict-related sexual violence are often met with silence, what happened to the Israeli victims and survivors was different. They were deemed unworthy of sympathy. What happened to them was justified. We learned that for decades university women’s studies programs were infused with an anti-Israel bias, ensuring that not only the feminist leaders of today, but those in the future would apply a double standard to Israeli victims. We also felt the ripple effect in the U.S. as secular domestic violence agencies refused to partner with Jewish Women International on trainings because ‘[their] staff supports Gaza,’ [and] as students deemed ‘Zionist’ were banned from campus sexual assault survivor groups.

“The global silence, disinformation and denial of the sexual atrocities of Oct. 7 ignited a fierce bond between American Jewish and Israeli women. We felt it viscerally — their pain is our pain. Their bodies are our bodies. Together with Seed the Dream Foundation, JWI launched the I Believe Israeli Women Global Movement. Today, 40 Jewish organizations form a coalition within the movement, standing not only in

solidarity, but in sisterhood. We lift the voices and work of Israeli women activists, experts, leaders, and survivors. Along with more than 20,000 people in eight countries of our global movement, we ensure that the truth of the sexual atrocities of Oct. 7 and with the hostages will not be erased or forgotten.”

Jason Isaacson

Chief policy and political affairs officer, American Jewish Committee

“From AJC’s diplomatic engagement over the last two years, we’ve seen an intensification of both negative and positive attitudes toward Israel, often in the same individuals. After the initial — short-lived in too many cases, and not always publicly expressed — outpouring of sympathy and solidarity with Israel in response to the atrocities of Oct. 7, we saw an evolution of reactions to Israel’s military response to the attacks it was facing on multiple fronts: from understanding of the imperative of Israeli decisiveness, to concern about ‘disproportionate’ action (a familiar trope), to impatience with the war’s duration — and, of course, amid saturation and often biased coverage, growing condemnation of the war’s humanitarian toll. At the same time, we repeatedly heard — including from Arab interlocutors — about the necessity of destroying Hamas and pushing back against the Iranian regime’s campaign of regional destabilization, and admiration, even awe, for Israel’s intelligence and military achievements in so significantly redrawing the strategic and political map of region — from Gaza to Lebanon to Syria and to Iran. When the hostages are home and the war is finally over, strained international and regional relations will need to be repaired, and many of us will be involved in that — but the value proposition for ties with Israel and for Israel’s full integration in the Middle East remains solid. We will continue to build on that.”

Emmanuel Navon

International relations lecturer, Tel Aviv University

“The initial reaction of European leaders and public opinion to the events of Oct. 7 was one of horror and condemnation. In the days that followed, most European leaders traveled to Israel to express solidarity. Yet, once Israel launched its military operation in Gaza, warnings about civilian casualties began to emerge. Since Oct. 7, Israel has become a focal point of Europe’s political divide. On the right, it is viewed as an embattled ally, while on the left it is increasingly demonized. This division reflects deeper cultural and ideological fault lines: Those seeking to dismantle Western civilization — whether Islamist or radical progressive — regard Israel as both its embodiment and its shield, whereas those committed to preserving the Judeo-Christian heritage recognize Israel’s struggle as their own.”

Michel Gurfinkiel

French journalist

“Europe’s growing hostility toward Israel since Oct. 7 reflects the fact that it is becoming less European by the day. A collapsing birthrate [in Europe] has opened the door to mass immigration, and that wave is steadily undermining Europe’s political institutions and moral compass. Nowhere is this clearer than in left-governed or left-leaning countries, where electoral reliance on Muslim immigrant communities or a geopolitical alliance with the ‘Global South’ has locked the political class into an anti-Israel posture. By contrast, those nations led by the right or turning to the right, which see the defense of Europe’s democratic culture as paramount, tend to stay supportive of Israel.”

Hayvi Bouzo

Syrian-American journalist and founder of Yalla Productions

“The horrific Oct. 7 attack, engineered by Iran-backed Hamas to derail Israel-Saudi peace and dismantle the Abraham Accords, has backfired. Two years later, despite pressure on Israel from some European countries and waves of online disinformation, the Arab and Muslim worlds are moving in a very different direction. Israel’s success in dismantling Iranian-backed terrorist militias across the region has changed how people see it and the conflict. Instead of being painted as the problem, Israel is increasingly seen as the liberator; a force pushing back against the very evils that have destroyed Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen and even Iran itself.

“Far from crumbling, the Abraham Accords have held strong. In fact, peace might be spreading. A security agreement with Syria is now being discussed, and in a historic moment, Indonesia’s president, the leader of the world’s largest Muslim-majority country, has sent positive messages to Israel and the Jewish people in his U.N. speech. What was meant to kill normalization has only fueled it. Peace is not just surviving, it’s expanding in ways Tehran and its proxies, including Hamas, didn’t see coming.”

Gilad Cohen

Israeli ambassador to Japan

“Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1952, Israel and Japan have enjoyed a strong partnership rooted in democratic values, respect for our ancient traditions and a spirit of innovation. Following Hamas’ brutal attack on Oct. 7, Japan expressed clear solidarity with Israel — condemning Hamas, recognizing Israel’s right to defend itself, imposing sanctions on senior Hamas leaders, calling for the release of our hostages and standing firmly against antisemitism. We remain especially grateful to then-Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa, who became the first senior leader from Asia to visit Israel after the attack. Today, our relations continue to grow through high-level visits, economic and people-to-people cooperation, and Israel’s participation in Expo 2025 Osaka.”

Joseph Rozen

Former director of Asia-Pacific for Israel’s National Security Council, 2016-2022

“Since Oct. 7 ... countries hostile to Israel and their partners, such as Russia and China, have intensified their rhetoric against Israel in light of the war, turning a blind eye to and even encouraging the spread of antisemitic content. Their motives include gaining favor among Global South nations and undermining the United States. This difficult situation has also affected Israel’s allies: As the war has dragged on, they have found it harder to maintain their support — a trend particularly evident in Europe and Asia.

“However, the geopolitical reality of the past two years has also highlighted Israel’s true partners on the international stage, including the United States, India, Czechia and Hungary. There have even been positive signals from unexpected quarters: Indonesia has maintained its support for the Palestinians but, rather than attacking Israel, has emphasized the need for tolerance and peace while advancing initiatives that would have been taboo in the Muslim-majority nation in the past. ... Looking ahead, Israel must leverage the geopolitical shifts of the past two years to reshape its relationships with major powers and other nations.”

Doron Spielman

Former IDF spokesperson and former vice president, City of David Foundation

“A clear line has been drawn in the sand, between those who support Israel and those who condemn us, but what is without doubt is that Israel has shown enormous courage in the face of terror, led by the very young men and women once disparagingly called the ‘TikTok generation.’ Whether the world recognizes this now or only later, history unfolds over decades and centuries, not news cycles. The nations that condemn Israel today will one day face the same choices we were forced to confront on Oct. 7, and they will look back in bewilderment at how this courage was not seen when it first emerged.”

Sarit Zehavi

President of the Alma Research and Education Center in northern Israel

“Oct. 7 made me understand what could have happened to us, the people that are living up north. While we were all aware of the preparedness of Hezbollah to launch an invasion to Israel, we actually were not prepared to defend the communities next to the border. Today I’m very busy in this, in asking those questions: How do we make sure that in the future, once we are surprised, we will be prepared? Because it’s really difficult to defend communities that are literally on the fence when you have on the other side of the border an enemy that doesn’t want to see you live here. For me, I understand that we can no longer live as neighbors to Hezbollah, and we have to do everything we can to make sure that Hezbollah is not back on the other side of the fence again.”

Bruce Pearl

Former Auburn Tigers basketball coach and chair of the board of the U.S.-Israel Education Association

“Oct. 7 was a reality check for some, but for others like me, it was a confirmation that the Palestinian leadership was not interested in a Palestinian state, but in freeing what they call Palestine of all the Jews. Got news for you: We’re home and we ain’t goin’ anywhere.”

Noa Tishby

Author and former Israeli envoy for combating antisemitism, 2022-2023

“Fifteen minutes into the massacre, it became clear that we were facing an epic and generational disaster. Another tragedy that has befallen the Jewish people. The repercussions of that day and the war that followed will unfold for decades, but we must be prepared for them as soon as possible. The main shift in our post-Oct. 7 reality is the understanding that antisemitism and anti-Zionism are inseparable. I know

it when I see it,' famously said U.S. Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart. And now we see it: hatred of Israel is the new form of hatred of Jews, no matter where your politics lie. We are still in triage when it comes to the Oct. 7 war. We are still in the emergency room, the war is still going on and 47 of our brothers and one sister remain held in Gaza. But the generational work will actually begin when it's over. That will be the time for us to recreate what it means to be Jewish and to recommit to Israel, and to what she represents for the diaspora and the rest of the world. We have a lot of work to do. But we have done this before, and we will do it again. Am Yisrael Chai."

Sharon Nazarian

Philanthropist and president, Younes & Soraya Nazarian Family Foundation

"The 12-day war between Israel, the U.S. and Iran was the amalgamation of 45 years of the hopes and wishes of the Iranian Diaspora. Since the 1979 revolution, my family, like so many Iranians, have dreamt of the day that the Islamic fundamentalist regime would be forced out of power. The Oct. 7 atrocities added fuel to the fire of our hopes, knowing that the regime had funded and enabled Hamas's barbarity. As we approach the second anniversary of Oct. 7, the debilitation of the Iranian regime and the message that has reverted across the world serves as a harbinger of hope for many Iranian Americans. And our aspiration that the global community has finally woken up."

OCTOBER 6, 2025

How Oct. 7 revolutionized Jewish advocacy

To mark the second anniversary of the Oct. 7 attacks in Israel, the Jewish Insider team asked leading thinkers and practitioners to reflect on how that day has changed the world. Here, we look at how Oct. 7 changed Jewish advocacy

By Lahav Harkov

A month after the Oct. 7 attack, hundreds of thousands of American Jews from across the country gathered on the National Mall in Washington to condemn antisemitism, support Israel and call for the release of the hostages held by Hamas in Gaza. That rally was a high point for the powerful sense of unity that swept the global Jewish community in the days and weeks after the terror attack.

Soon, new language emerged to describe this newfound Jewish engagement and

activism. Jewish communities called it "The Surge": a sharp increase in attendance at Shabbat dinners, synagogues and Jewish cultural and educational events — a phenomenon that, two years later, has slowed but not receded. New York Times columnist Bret Stephens referred to the many American Jews who, for the first time, were waking up to the targeting of Israel and its allies, and choosing to get involved with the community rather than shy away from it, as "Oct. 8 Jews."

"On Oct. 8, Jews woke up to discover who our friends are not," Stephens wrote, describing the sense of betrayal that many liberal Jews felt as they questioned why their progressive allies, whom they had stood by for decades, were not standing with them. Two years later, historic alliances have been tested and new ones forged, even as fissures within the Jewish community about how to address the war in Gaza are growing deeper. ♦

Tyler Gregory

CEO of the Jewish Community Relations Council Bay Area

"We're beginning to see a third era of post-World War II Jewish American organizing take shape. The first was volunteer-led as we emerged from the darkness of the Shoah; the second began as our institutions increasingly professionalized with experts. Today we are working to marry the best of each of these eras to secure our future — with newfound grassroots and community activism after Oct. 7, in partnership with institutional professionals who have the civic relationships and expertise. This is an all-hands-on-deck moment, and our growing collective energy is the bright spot in an otherwise difficult period."

Julia Jassey

Co-founder and CEO of Jewish on Campus

"The most critical challenge that the Jewish community is facing — beginning before Oct. 7 and growing to today — is 'anti-normalization,' or the rejection of dialogue with Jewish people because of our relationship to Israel. The irony is that young Jews are more hungry for dialogue than ever. We have seen that antisemitism stems from ignorance as often as it stems from animosity, and the next generation of Jewish leaders understands that the answer to ignorance is education."

Matan Sivek

Co-founder, Hostage Families Forum U.S.

“Over the past two years, we’ve seen the Jewish community rise to the challenge, standing firmly for the hostages and embodying its core values of saving lives and the mitzvah of redeeming hostages. The issue of the hostages has remained bipartisan, becoming a unifying force that galvanizes not only the Jewish community but also many others who stand with us in our fight to bring them all home. The relentless efforts to bring home hostages have become a central focus of Jewish advocacy, showcasing the community’s impact. Thanks to those efforts, the issue has remained front and center globally, even through the transition of U.S. administrations. Sadly, although the Jewish American community’s advocacy has been crucial to the efforts and helped bring home many of the hostages, not all of them are home, two years later. We are deeply grateful for the unwavering support and dedication of the Jewish American community in this ongoing fight.”

Eric Fingerhut

President and CEO, Jewish Federations of North America

“Since Oct. 7, the Jewish community in North America is more united than ever. We understand that small differences in opinion are less important than standing together. We work hard to coordinate and collaborate. While disagreements make great stories, and no period is entirely without them, the real story of this time is the deep and profound commitment to Jewish unity across the breadth of our community.”

Betsy Berns Korn

Chair, Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations

“In my conversations around the world, we are speaking less about Jews living in Israel and Jews living in the Diaspora as separate peoples but as one community with common goals and aspirations. We are embracing our kinship, our common bonds and interests, and our shared experiences as a part of a peoplehood across generations and geographies.”

Rabbi Diana Fersko

Senior rabbi of the Village Temple in Manhattan

“The biggest change in the realm of Jewish communal advocacy is best understood through Rabbi Hillel’s oft-quoted teaching: ‘If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am only for myself, what am I?’ On Oct. 6, American Jews were largely focused on the second part of Hillel’s teaching. It felt almost selfish or ‘privileged’ to suggest otherwise. After Oct. 7, we knew better.”

Amy Spitalnick

CEO of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs

“Oct. 7 and its aftermath have only reinforced the false binaries and false choices that have long shaped the conversations on antisemitism and Israel. Extreme voices on both ends of the political spectrum have worked overtime to pit the Jewish community against others: those on the right who say we cannot counter antisemitism without undermining our democratic institutions and values, and those on the left who say we cannot be proudly Jewish or connected to Israel while remaining committed to humanitarian and democratic values. All of this makes it even more urgent to lean into the hard work of coalition- and partnership-building across lines of difference, despite it feeling more challenging than ever.”

Jonathan Greenblatt

CEO of the Anti-Defamation League

“Oct. 7 changed everything. Antisemitism has become normalized in ways we never imagined. What was once unthinkable — denial of the Oct. 7 atrocities, open support for terrorist groups, assaults on Jewish students — today is not only tolerated but has moved into the mainstream. Strident anti-Zionism has become prevalent in progressive circles. Right-wing extremists promote wild conspiracies that recycle tired antisemitic tropes. In response, ADL has innovated dramatically to increase our effectiveness. We’ve introduced cutting-edge gen-AI tools to fight online antisemitism. We’ve taken the fight to new frontiers such as LLMs and Wikipedia. We’ve launched new tools like the Campus Antisemitism Report Card and Jewish Policy Index to hold college administrators and elected officials accountable. We’ve experimented in new fields such as our TOV ETF that supports shareholder advocacy. And we’ve recommitted to our partnerships with local Jewish communities, empowering more than 400,000 volunteers to take action and stand united against antisemitism.”

Sarah Levin

Executive director of JIMENA: Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa

“Since Oct. 7, we’ve seen an alarming rise in antisemitism in the U.S., much of it fueled by revisionist narratives that erase the history of nearly one million Jewish refugees from the Middle East and North Africa in order to paint Israel and the Jewish people as European colonizers, a distortion we know to be utterly false. As Mizrahi and Sephardic Jews, we share our stories again and again to remind the world that Jews are indigenous to the Middle East, that we are one people, and that Jews from Arab lands reject the notion that our Ashkenazi brothers and sisters are foreigners in their own ancestral home. At JIMENA, this has meant doubling down on distributing our educational resources to departments of education in every U.S. state, while building coalitions and working on projects with other indigenous and minority groups from the region including Coptic Christians, Assyrians, Yezidis and Druze so that the Jewish story is understood as part of a broader struggle for survival, dignity and truth.”

Elan Carr

CEO of the Israeli-American Council

“Oct. 7 and the unhinged antisemitism that followed have awakened in many Jews a deepened sense of identity and a renewed commitment to the welfare of our people. Jewish advocacy becomes far more potent when we arise and unite around our shared goals, and because of common threats, our community is closer to that elusive aspiration than we have been in a long time. May this new year bring us ever more unity, and may God reward us with victory!”

Sydney Altfield

National director, Teach Coalition

“In the two years since Oct. 7, advocacy has taken on a new meaning. No longer confined to lobbyists or political insiders, it has become a collective responsibility for Jewish communities nationwide. As we fight for the Jewish future, and the need for strong and secure Jewish education for all our children, our communities are stepping forward, recognizing that every voice — at every level — has the power to make a difference. In this critical moment, we’ve seen people carry their demands for change to the ballot box, state capitols, federal and city halls and beyond, ensuring that our needs and concerns cannot be ignored.”

Rabbi Mordechai Lightstone

Director of Chabad Young Professionals’ TechTribe

“There’s been a sea change in our Jewish community. Despite the challenges we’ve faced, Jews have responded with an awakening of Jewish pride: by leaning into their Judaism. I’ve personally seen Jews from across the tech ecosystem, from big tech to startups, call for more Jewish engagement: Torah study, mitzvah practice and vibrant community. The Rebbe taught us that our role as Jewish leaders is, first and foremost, to recognize this tremendous thirst, and to meet the call of the moment by providing the timeless tools of Torah and mitzvos that empower every Jew to stand taller, prouder, more confident and more deeply grounded in their identity.”

Allison Tombros Korman

Founder and executive director of the Red Tent Fund

“After Oct. 7, I and many others in progressive spaces — abortion access, mental health, immigration reform and others — were unfairly forced to choose between our Jewish identity and the issues we are passionately committed to. This is particularly painful given that the Jewish community has been longstanding leaders and partners in reproductive health work, with over 80% of American Jews believing abortion should be legal in all or most cases. I created the Red Tent Fund to bridge Jewish values with direct service work securing abortion access, ensuring a space where no one must choose between their identity and their commitment to reproductive freedom — and we remain focused on centering the needs of those seeking abortion care above all else.”

Nathan Diamant

CEO of the Jewish Community Relations Council Bay Area

“In the aftermath of Oct. 7, I have seen Jewish advocacy and activism change in several key ways. (1) Doubling down on coalition partnerships with ‘real’ allies is more critical than ever. In the wake of Oct. 7, some Jewish leaders and organizations found themselves abandoned by partners who they thought were ‘allies,’ but at our time of crisis and need showed themselves otherwise. On the other hand, there are allied groups who have stuck with the Jewish community, and we must do more to maintain and strengthen our relationships with those

loyal friends. (2) More American Jews than ever recognize how critical activism is and are willing to put in the time. More people in our community are volunteering more of their time and other resources, whether it's coming to D.C. on a mission, volunteering on GOTV [Get Out the Vote] work and more. (3) We have seen the polling that younger Americans, in both the Republican and Democratic camps, are less supportive of Israel (and the Jewish community). We must invest effort in educating and cultivating young people in our communities to pursue careers in politics and policy so they can be in positions of power and influence, or we risk terrible outcomes."

David Friedman

Former U.S. ambassador to Israel, 2017-2021

"No Jew is the same since Oct. 7. We all have become more vulnerable and more conscious of how we relate to the rest of the world. Many of us have become stronger in our commitment and resolve to perpetuate our ancient tradition. Regrettably, some have given up the fight as a result of intimidation or apathy. But we all have changed."

Zibby Owens

Author and bookstore owner

"The impact of Oct. 7 on Jewish activism has been profound. The atrocities particularly mobilized those in the Jewish diaspora like me. Before Oct. 7, we didn't need to be 'active' in the same way when there wasn't an active threat to our existence. How quickly that changed. And so we speak out, call out, write, unite. We do anything in our power to halt the train that seems to be speeding right towards us. We remind people 'never again' as we contend with the division among Jews over Israel's military tactics and, of course, the widespread hate from many non-Jews. We are standing up for that long-lost relative or close friend we don't see enough and getting beaten up for it. But we are doing it together. Where there's division, there is also intense bonding and new communities forming. Our tribe is strengthening exponentially. Powerfully."

Michal Cotler-Wunsh

Former Israeli envoy for combatting antisemitism, 2023-2025

"No less than the horror and heinous war crimes and crimes against humanity perpetrated on Oct. 7 — international silence, denial, justification and a tsunami of antisemitism in response to the atrocities perpetrated by genocidal terror and the multi-front war waged that day — exposed the imperative for a dramatic shift in Jewish advocacy. A decades-long unconventional war for hearts and minds that systematically hijacked, redefined, inverted [and] weaponized international principles and institutions to demonize, delegitimize and apply double standards to the State of Israel normalized a modern strain of this ever-mutating hate, as defined by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) in a long democratic process.

But antisemitism is never just a problem of Jews. It is a problem of antisemites, and of the places and spaces that allow them to peddle and spread this lethal hate. [There is a] modern 'acceptable' strain of 'just anti-Zionism' — that denies Israel's right to exist, targets not only Jews, but Zionists who support Israel's existence, in any borders. Addressing antisemitism, and the threat to humanity and freedom that it signals, demands recognition of the danger it predicts, and the creation and implementation of strategies to comprehensively identify and combat it."

Eric Goldstein

CEO, UJA-Federation of New York

"Among the greatest challenges confronting American Jewry before Oct. 7 were apathy and complacency. No longer. Oct. 7 — and its reverberations here [in the U.S.] — were a reckoning for the American Jewish community, igniting in many a renewed sense of clarity and responsibility: to speak out loudly and unapologetically for Israel's right to exist as a Jewish homeland, for the hostages and against antisemitism. In today's political environment, that responsibility has only deepened, calling for a collective voice that is stronger and more united."

Ellie Cohan

Former U.S. deputy special envoy to monitor and combat antisemitism, 2019-2021

"What I have found powerful is the number of Christian and conservative leaders who rallied around the Jewish community since Oct. 7. For me personally, it happened within weeks of the attack that I received a call from James Carafano of the Heritage Foundation, who patched me on with Pastor Mario Bramnick and Pastor Luke Moon — and the three men told me they knew the time had come to stand with American Jews in what they believed was an anti-American and antisemitic movement that was forming. It was then that we decided

to launch the 'National Taskforce to Combat Antisemitism,' a coalition that has now grown to 45+ Christian, conservative and Jewish organizations dedicated to taking down the pro-Hamas movement in the U.S."

Mark Regev

Former Israeli ambassador to the U.K., 2016-2020

"On Oct. 7, when Hamas stormed across the border to murder, mutilate and rape, they did not pause to ask whether their victims supported or opposed judicial reform, whether they were Orthodox or secular, left or right. Hamas showed themselves to be indiscriminate in their barbarity — equal-opportunity killers. At a time when Israelis can often be preoccupied with internal divisions, Hamas delivered a stark reminder: our common destiny is far greater, and far more enduring, than anything that may separate us."

Lisa Eisen

Co-president, Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies

"Through the pain of Oct. 7, the Jewish community strengthened its resolve to show up as proud Jews, to stand with and support the Israeli people and to fight antisemitism. This work has included providing unprecedented levels of assistance to Israel to heal and rebuild, as well as ensuring that support for Israel and the U.S.-Israel relationship remain bipartisan in a polarized time. It has included reimagining Israel education, supporting organizations who embrace humanity, nuance and complexity in their work on these issues, and building alliances with those who seek spaces of unity and solidarity while moving past the extremes on both sides. It has included showing up as proud Jews, in secular spaces, who remain committed to building more just and inclusive societies in the U.S. and Israel."

Zvika Klein

Editor-in-chief, The Jerusalem Post

"When Donald Trump first became president in 2017, any antisemitic graffiti in a Jewish cemetery or JCC would immediately become news on a national and international level. He was blamed for a so-called new wave of antisemitism. Fast forward to our time, since Oct. 7, graffiti in Jewish cemeteries isn't considered a news item anymore. At least, an item on a local radio or news site. Another difference is that being antisemitic isn't something people feel they have a need to hide anymore. It's actually popular to be anti-Jewish. They no longer need to blame the Zionists, but straight out say, 'It's all because of the Jews.' That is something that really worries me."

Robert Kraft

CEO of the Kraft Group and founder of the Foundation to Combat Antisemitism

"The events of Oct. 7 profoundly changed American Jewish life. The surge in antisemitism — and the fear, concern and vulnerability it has created — has reached levels most of us have never experienced in our lifetimes and is reminiscent of Germany in the late 1930s. When I founded the Foundation to Combat Antisemitism six years ago, I could not have imagined our mission would become more urgent than it is today. The data makes it clear: We must continue to educate Americans to the hate around us, to the hate that is directed at Jews, and non-Jews. Hate is the fuel that can ultimately lead to the destruction of our society if it is not addressed. Yet even in this difficult moment, we have seen hope. Stand Up Sunday brought together neighbors, coworkers, and friends from every background, who stood with us and spoke out in their own communities. The advertising that we are doing through our foundation has created measurable positive feedback — awareness creates solidarity and solidarity is what will allow our society to stand up to hate. The road ahead will not be easy. But together — through empathy, education, and fellowship — we can confront the hate that fuels violence and discrimination, and build a safer, stronger future for Jewish people and for all people."

Former Rep. Kathy Manning (D-NC)

Chair, Democratic Majority for Israel

"Simply stated, Oct. 7 changed our world, bringing darkness and isolation to Israel and American Jews. Although antisemitism has been on the rise for years, it burst forth like a tidal wave on Oct. 8, washing away the illusion that the oldest, shape-shifting conspiracy theory, the reflexive hatred of Jews, could be eradicated or even contained."

"As an American Jew, a former chair of JFNA, a former member of Congress and board chair of DMFI, I understand how important the U.S.-Israel relationship is to the U.S., and how fundamental the connection to Israel, the ancestral Jewish homeland, is to American Jews. I also know that our government, both Democrats and Republicans, have supported the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish state for more than 75 years. Our relationship will survive these challenging times."

How Oct. 7 changed U.S. – Israel relations

To mark the second anniversary of the Oct. 7 attacks in Israel, the Jewish Insider team asked leading thinkers and practitioners to reflect on how that day has changed the world. Here, we look at how Oct. 7 changed Jewish advocacy

By Lahav Harkov

The post-Oct. 7 period has seen, in many ways, a strengthening of the U.S.-Israel alliance under two different presidents from different parties — even as the relationship has been under strain and faced substantial tests.

Former President Joe Biden was a stalwart supporter of Israel, even amid growing counter-currents from his party's base, but later paused some weapons shipments as his administration sought to halt expansions of Israel's military operations in Gaza. Under the Biden administration, the United States used its own military resources to defend Israel from Iranian attacks, and the Trump administration later followed suit and closely worked with the Jewish state to take out Iran's nuclear facilities.

Trump, who has welcomed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to the White House four times in less than a year, has

backed Israel's military operations in Gaza with less equivocation than his predecessor, but there have also been some notable moments of disagreement, most recently when the president criticized Israel's strike on Hamas leaders in Qatar and pressed Israel to halt operations in Gaza after Hamas' partial acceptance of a hostage deal.

Both administrations spent months negotiating hostage and ceasefire agreements that usually ended in failure, and in recent days, the Trump administration has been intimately involved in negotiating with Israel and allied Arab states a possible end of the war in Gaza in exchange for the release of all the remaining Israeli hostages.

There have also been major changes in the tenor of U.S. policy debates towards Israel. On the Democratic side, anti-Israel trends have accelerated: 27 Senate Democrats voted in August to suspend some arms transfers to Israel, more than 50

congressional Democrats backed stringent permanent conditions on arms sales to Israel and dozens of Democratic lawmakers called for U.S. recognition of a Palestinian state.

On the Republican side, skepticism of U.S. aid to Israel and outright anti-Israel sentiment has grown rapidly among the increasingly influential isolationist faction of the party. Twenty-one Republicans voted last year against aid to Israel and some vocal skeptics of the U.S.-Israel relationship have found roles in the Pentagon and Office of the Department of National Intelligence. These political trends, combined with the stream of anti-Israel invective from far-right media figures like Tucker Carlson, have led some pro-Israel conservative leaders to see the isolationist faction of their party as a serious concern ♦

Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX)

Senator representing Texas

"Alongside the horror, Oct. 7 was a historically clarifying event, and in particular it clarified two realities, one domestic and one international. Domestically, Oct. 7 ripped the mask off the genocidal antisemitism that had been developing on American college campuses and in our media. Internationally, the attack showed that our Israeli allies could no longer tolerate allowing Hamas to exist along its borders. I said that day the U.S. interest was straightforward: to provide Israel with all the security assistance and diplomatic support it needed to utterly destroy Hamas."

Sen. Jacky Rosen (D-NV)

Senator representing Nevada

"On Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas carried out the deadliest terrorist attack on the Jewish people since the Holocaust and took hundreds of innocent people hostage. This senseless act of brutal violence was one of Israel's most vulnerable moments, but it showed the world that its allies stood by the only democracy in the Middle East. Since this fateful day, I've been working across party lines to make it clear in Congress that America stands with Israel in support of its security, and that the American people also broadly support peace between Israelis and Palestinians, a surge of humanitarian aid and the hostages coming home. We'll continue to make it clear: Support for Israel is, and will remain, bipartisan."

Elliott Abrams

Former U.S. special representative for Iran, 2020-2021

“The Hamas attack and the Israeli response accelerated trends that were already visible, namely declining support for Israel on the left, including among very many Democrats, and the end of Israel as a truly bipartisan issue. The Israeli reliance on American weaponry and resupply, and on the U.S. to finish the job in Iran, also suggest that the era of Israel defending itself ‘by itself’ (as the slogan went) is over, but that will lead Israel to try to grow its domestic military industries and try to limit that reliance to the degree practicable.”

Dana Stroul

Former deputy assistant secretary of defense for the Middle East, 2021-2024, research director at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy

“From a military perspective, the U.S.-Israel relationship reached new heights in the post-Oct. 7 period. The U.S. significantly changed its military plans to prioritize Israel’s defense by surging aircraft carriers and other capabilities into the Middle East, and supplied Israel from its own military stocks — all without precedent when considered in the aggregate. The region witnessed in real-time the value of integrating air-defense systems with the U.S. and Israel ... and this summer saw the U.S. enter the Iran war alongside Israel as a co-combatant. ... A key feature of the current strategic landscape is the divergence between the deepening military partnership on the one hand, and the increasing criticism of Israel’s actions outside of military lanes.”

Daniel Gordis

Author and Koret Distinguished Fellow at Shalem College in Jerusalem

“Oct. 7 made Israel more dependent on the U.S. (for weapons and diplomatic support) than it has ever been, while tectonic shifts in American politics make American support uncertain. A Democratic White House could well be hostile to Israel, but an isolationist Vance (or similar) White House would also be dangerous. ... Whichever way American politics turns, America’s support for Israel will be both more critical than ever even as it proves more tenuous than we once imagined possible.”

Josh Hammer

Senior editor-at-large, Newsweek

“It has never been clearer that Israel can no longer rely, as it long did, on unwavering bipartisan support from political leaders in the United States. Israel must grapple with this inescapable reality — and it must do so quickly. The Jewish state should endeavor to make itself as self-sufficient as it possibly can.”

Michael Koplow

Chief policy officer, Israel Policy Forum

“The U.S.-Israel relationship rests on shared values and shared interests. The aftermath of Oct. 7 and the ongoing Gaza war has caused many in the shared values camp to doubt that the two countries are on the same page, and many in the shared interests camp to doubt that the two are on the same page, precisely when these are becoming more prominent issues in domestic politics. It has turned Israel into something that not only increasingly divides Democrats and Republicans from each other, but something that creates intraparty divides as well.”

Jeremy Ben-Ami

President, J Street

“The horrific violence of Oct. 7 and all that has followed has pushed U.S.-Israel debates to new extremes. The divides are deeper and the harshest voices are even louder – with positions on both sides hardening, making it harder to find common ground. Yet at the same time, I’m seeing more and more people quietly searching for a voice of reason and sanity in the middle.”

Eliot A. Cohen

Professor emeritus at Johns Hopkins School of Advance International Studies and former counselor of the U.S. State Department, 2007-2009

“What is possibly most surprising is how little Oct. 7 changed the fundamentals in the U.S.-Israeli relationship; it may have accelerated some trends or damped down others, but that is it. The drift of younger, more secular and liberal Jews away from Zionism (and the continued commitment of the more religious and conservative Jewish community to it), the increased animosity against Israel on the extremes of the left and right (more the former than the latter), the generally strong support of political conservatives and devout Christians — all of these have continued.”

Aaron David Miller

Senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and former U.S. peace negotiator

“The most important takeaway since Oct. 7 is that for the first time in the history of the state, Israel has escalation dominance — the capacity to control the pace, focus, intensity of military action with its adversaries; escalate at will and block [adversaries’] ability to do so. Under Biden and Trump, the U.S. rode Israel’s military power almost without constraint. The question going forward is whether a reluctant Israeli prime minister determined to keep his seat will cross a U.S. president eager to end wars and press Israel to convert its military power into more durable political arrangements.”

Norm Ornstein

Senior fellow emeritus at the American Enterprise Institute

“Of course, Oct. 7 and its aftermath has increased visible and open antisemitism — and more open Islamophobia at the same time. It has created major schisms in many universities — internally, on how to deal with dissent, disruption and free speech, and as a lever for Donald Trump to attack and defund the most prestigious ones. One other major effect has been to accelerate the partisan divide over Israel. As Israel has prosecuted its all-out war on Gaza, turned a blind eye to or assisted settler thugs burning Palestinian villages and assaulting their residents in the West Bank, and threatened annexation, many Democrats who have otherwise been strong supporters of Israel have been more outspoken in their criticism. The fallout from Oct. 7, not just in Israel but in America, is profound and deeply unsettling.”



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