

THE WEEKLY PRINT

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SEPTEMBER 8, 2026

Rep. Jared Moskowitz: Pro-Israel Democrats are being 'ostracized' in the Democratic Party

He attributed much of the shift on Israel policy among his Democratic colleagues to bullying, harassment and threats from the anti-Israel camp

By Marc Rod

For Rep. Jared Moskowitz (D-FL), the Democratic caucus has become an increasingly lonely place for those who remain staunchly pro-Israel, with what he described as bullying, harassment and threats from the anti-Israel camp contributing to the shift away from Israel among Democratic lawmakers.

"What is it like to be in the caucus? It's become lonely," Moskowitz said during a wide-ranging interview with *Jewish Insider* in his Capitol Hill office last week. "None of my colleagues are mean to me, but it is an ostracizing feeling. There's no doubt that the Democrats that are super pro-Israel, in general, feel somewhat ostracized, and how could you not?"

He said that the "mushy middle" of the party is being pushed left, explaining that he has had colleagues tell him that consultants have told them that, in order to win reelection, they'll need to reject AIPAC or vote against pro-Israel legislation or express opposition to Israeli missile-defense systems.

"No one really loves family infighting," he said. "For me, I'm fighting for what I

believe in. For me, it's not about the polling. I'll go down on this issue. Ultimately, I'm not interested in moderating to try to win my election."

He also attributed some of the shift to harassment and threats of violence targeting members, including Moskowitz being the target of an assassination attempt in 2024. Standing up for Israel, at this point, puts members' families at risk, he said, and with that pressure coming exclusively from the anti-Israel side, it's no surprise that some members are caving.

"I talk to members. They're scared from all of this stuff. Not only are they scared, their spouses are scared, and do not underestimate the spouse in this congressional relationship," he said. "The bullying is only happening one way. Members are getting bullied online. They're getting bullied in the hallways. They come down the steps [from the House chamber], cameras get put in their face on this issue."

Moskowitz said that, because he has refused to cave on this issue, he now needs armed security and police protecting him in his district — as do other outspoken

members. He said that it's important for members who have been outspoken, on both sides of the aisle, to be reelected.

"If you look at what's happened to the Jewish community in two years, where are we in five? Where are we in five years? Are we going to lose an entire political party?" he asked.

And Moskowitz warned that he sees similar issues on the horizon in the Republican Party. "The Tucker [Carlson] wing of the [Republican] Party is ready to pounce. The only thing that's keeping them at bay is Trump. ... The fight you're seeing that we're having now, they are going to have on the right."

The Florida congressman, asked about the upcoming Israeli elections, said that he believes that some of his Democratic colleagues have "backed themselves into a corner" by focusing their criticism on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"A lot of my colleagues, when they voted to cut off aid to Israel, both in the Senate and in the House, said, 'Well, it was all about Netanyahu,'" he recounted. "My argument to them was, 'At some point, he

won't be there. How are you going to go back to those voters who you've now courted because you cut off aid and go back to them saying, 'Well I'm going to let the aid flow now because Netanyahu is gone?'"

As a result, he predicted that a loss for Netanyahu would do little to change Democratic discourse on Israel, noting that anti-Israel voices online have already begun to target other Israeli leaders as polling has suggested that Netanyahu may lose.

Moskowitz said that the recent outrage, from both progressive commentators and some of his colleagues, over his appointment as ranking member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee's Middle East and North Africa subcommittee has been disproportionate to the position itself, and tinged with "veiled antisemitism."

At the same time, Moskowitz argued that the appointment shows that pro-Israel Jews remain part of the Democratic "big tent" — at least for Democratic House leaders. He also noted that anyone on the committee — which includes several vocal critics of Israel — could have objected to the appointment, but chose not to.

"For me, this isn't game theory. This is real," Moskowitz said, emphasizing that his relatives fled the Holocaust in Europe. "Tough economic times in a country, wealth inequality — the Jews. It's not a new playbook that's being run on the community."

"Not only does the big tent include pro-Israel Jews but we're going to give them leadership spots on that issue," he said.

He said that he sees criticisms of "Zionists" and of Israel as barely disguised attacks on the Jewish people as a whole — with the vast majority of American Jews being Zionists — drawing on historic tropes and patterns.

"If we don't fix the affordability issue, antisemitism is going to continue to get worse," he added. "For me, it's intricately linked. It's not our fault, but we are being made the scapegoat for all of these things. Flock cameras? Jews. AI? Jews. Can't afford your groceries? Jews. If we don't start fixing problems here, we're going to be on the short side of that stick."

His children, he said, will grow up in a

different and more hostile America than he did, after the Jewish community had believed it was assimilated and safe.

"We assimilated in Spain. We assimilated in Germany. Never thought what could happen could happen, and we were expelled and exterminated in both of those countries," he said.

He credited much of the rise in antisemitism and anti-Israel sentiment to malign foreign influence, particularly through coordinated bot campaigns on social media. He said that, if the Nazis had a tool like social media on their side during World War II, they likely would have won.

"Congrats to China and our foreign adversaries, who took an 80-20 issue and turned it into a 20-80 issue as an experiment in a petri dish that they can apply to Taiwan in the future," Moskowitz said. "We're just letting foreign adversaries decide how the American people are going to think on everything."

He described social media platforms as deliberately blind to the problem — until similar tactics were applied to the issue of data centers, which could impact their bottom lines.

"When it comes to Israel, I want to see them treated like any other ally," he continued. "If the idea is that the majority of our members want to cut off aid to Israel, then we're going to have to look at all our other allies' humanitarian records, and we're going to have to treat them all the same. I look at that as calling balls and strikes, and getting into reality off of the internet."

Moskowitz is favored to be chairman of the Middle East subcommittee next year if Democrats take the House, but he said he would still need to rally support on the committee to secure the seat. He said that ultimately House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY) and Foreign Affairs Committee Ranking Member Greg Meeks (D-NY) would set the agenda for Democrats, but that he sees opportunities to use the post to strengthen U.S. ties with the Gulf and Mideast allies.

He called the decision to allow a Saudi nuclear energy deal to proceed without Saudi Arabia joining the Abraham Accords

a "missed opportunity" and said it's important to ensure that Gulf allies don't try to appease Iran "because the Iran war now has gone south."

The congressman also blasted those who blame Israel alone for the war in Iran, explaining that in conversations with ambassadors from the Gulf countries, "they were all supportive of this — all of them," but are now "upset about the marketing and the branding of the war" and hiding from responsibility.

Moskowitz supported the administration's 2025 strikes on Iran's nuclear program, and opposed war powers efforts to block a U.S. attack on Iran before the war began earlier this year. But he has supported war powers resolutions since the war started, arguing that Congress must preserve its constitutional role in making war.

"I think the president made a mistake in hindsight. Think about it this way: In an alternative reality, had he come to Congress in the very beginning, it probably would have passed," he said, "and then we would have owned it with him. He owns it all on his own."

He said the administration underestimated Iran's willingness to take the Strait of Hormuz hostage and to expand the war to attack Gulf allies, and overestimated the fragility of the Iranian regime.

Moskowitz also said that the administration has shifted and scaled back its goals, noting that Trump no longer emphasizes the need to remove enriched nuclear material from Iran, now focusing primarily on the Strait of Hormuz.

"We didn't succeed on the terms he told people of why we were going. And so I think it was a completely failed strategy on prosecuting the war," Moskowitz said, even as he said he's glad that former Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei is dead, Iran's navy has been destroyed and the Iranian nuclear program has been set back.

He said he does not want the war to become a long-term problem, but also said that he still does not want to see a deal that would provide Iran with substantial financial relief. "That has to be still the

North Star. They cannot have a nuclear weapon. But mistakes that we have made to try to achieve that now could have long-term repercussions.”

Since beating Democratic Socialists of America member Oliver Larkin by nearly 30 points in his primary race, Moskowitz has gone on the offensive against the DSA and the surging socialist wing of the Democratic Party.

He said that he thinks mainstream Democrats need to recognize income inequality and other economic struggles that are driving young people toward the DSA, but also need to realize that the DSA is “awash in antisemitism” and a range of other unpopular and fringe ideas.

“There will be members here from the DSA, but they’ll be 5% of the caucus,” Moskowitz said. “What we can’t do is what the Republicans did with [former House Speaker] Kevin McCarthy. We can’t go make a deal with the DSA because then that deal

will be held over the entire caucus for the next two years while we’re in power.”

He said that, despite being targeted with what he described as the “whole DSA apparatus” in his primary, he decided not to engage directly with his opponent, to not run negative ads and to try to keep the race local.

“I was going to deny these viral moments for them,” he said, arguing that other Democrats had erred by getting in direct fights with DSA opponents. “It was my belief that the voters would reject it without me having to spend a ton of money explaining to them why it was bad, and that’s what happened.”

He said his polling showed that Larkin’s stances were turning off voters and argued that his strategies “blew up in their face,” alienating older voters, Jewish voters and Hispanic voters.

“This is not a place that the DSA can win in, and they shouldn’t have done it because it made them look stupid,” Moskowitz said.

Moskowitz noted that he now enters the general election with \$2 million, a substantial cash advantage over his Republican opponent, former Boca Raton Mayor Scott Singer, who is also Jewish.

He argued that his brand of politics and his past ties to former Gov. Ron DeSantis will help him win over independent voters in the general election, and highlighted his appeal with Jewish voters, among whom he vastly outperformed former Vice President Kamala Harris in the 2024 election. He noted that he doesn’t have to calibrate stances on the U.S.-Israel relationship in his district, but can instead express his honest views in a way that other Democrats can’t.

“This election between me and [Singer], on [Israel and antisemitism] in particular, is the difference between a vote versus a voice,” Moskowitz continued. “He’ll be a vote on pro-Israel. I’m not going to deny that. He will be a vote, but he won’t be a voice.” ♦

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After son's remains returned from Gaza, Ruby Chen continues his fight in Washington and beyond

Chen — father of Itay Chen, whose body was held by Hamas for more than two years — is continuing to advocate to ensure that American victims of Oct. 7 are remembered, and that his son’s ‘sacrifice was not in vain’

By Marc Rod

LAS VEGAS — In November 2025, Itay Chen’s remains were returned to his family, more than two years after he was killed in his tank during the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attacks on Israel, during which terrorists took Chen’s remains to Gaza. Chen was the last American held hostage by the terrorist group to be released.

His father, Ruby Chen, spent those two years flying to Washington and around the world advocating for his son’s freedom. But even though his son has been laid to rest, Chen’s fight isn’t over. Now, he’s working to ensure that the American victims of Oct. 7 are remembered, that his son’s “sacrifice was not in vain” and to ensure that other families don’t have to go through the same

pain, Chen told *Jewish Insider* on the sidelines of the Republican Jewish Coalition conference last week in Las Vegas.

Chen said that he sees his continuing advocacy, through meetings with lawmakers, administration officials and others, as part of his “rehabilitation” to help him cope with the loss of his son. “At least that’s what helps me get out of bed,” Chen said.

Chen is working to elevate the memory of the 46 American citizens killed on and after Oct. 7 while being held by Hamas — emphasizing that many in the American public at large and even the Jewish community are ill-aware of them — pushing for a State Department-backed

memorial event in Washington next month alongside other families of the bereaved.

He said he’s in touch with senior members of the administration about the memorial event, who have been supportive, and he’s “positively optimistic” that it will come to fruition.

On Capitol Hill, Chen is pushing for an investigative committee to probe the Oct. 7 attacks, with a focus on the American casualties and how Hamas’ preparations went unnoticed — particularly in light of the Israeli government’s failure to launch its own investigation.

He said that the pre-midterm election season is a difficult time for such conversations, but that there are lawmakers on both sides of the aisle willing to consider

the prospect. “I think that people recognize that we deserve some basic answers,” Chen said.

Such a committee, he added, could also help provide ongoing support and monitoring for the families of the bereaved, in the same way that Congress did for the families of victims of the 9/11 attacks.

Chen is pushing for further sanctions on Hamas, Iran and its proxies by both the U.S. and European countries, offering strong criticism for what he said was the Biden administration’s failure to adequately utilize sanctions, as well as difficulties in bringing European allies along, particularly as a result of EU bureaucracy and opposition from some EU member states.

Chen highlighted Turkey’s role as a financial hub for Hamas and other Iranian proxies. “For the love of God, I do not understand why the president, [who] is so close to Turkey and [its president, Recep Tayyip] Erdoğan, is not demanding” that terrorist-linked bank accounts in Turkey are not shut down, Chen said.

“There are always other interests that are on the table, and things get compromised,” he continued. “It’s unfortunate, but that is the case.”

Chen also is pursuing civil penalties against individuals who have backed and facilitated Hamas’ activities in U.S. courts, with open suits against Palestinian American businessman Bashar Masri, accused of working with Hamas, and the cryptocurrency platform Binance, whose CEO was pardoned by President Donald Trump for other crimes last year.

He urged the Department of Justice to take a more active role and provide evidence that can bolster those cases, explaining that then-Attorney General Pam Bondi had seemed supportive at the start of the administration and launched an interagency task force focused on Oct. 7, but that there have yet to be any results from that task force.

Additionally, Chen is pushing to resume normalization efforts between Israel and its Arab neighbors, arguing that Trump “could definitely realign the Middle East for decades ahead” given his singular “political capital” in the region.

Chen offered praise for the U.S. negotiating team, including White House Special Envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner. Chen said that he first connected with Kushner in January 2024, a year before Trump took office, when Kushner began to educate him on Middle East political dynamics.

He said his family and Witkoff had connected over Witkoff’s loss of his own son. In their first conversation, they explained to Witkoff that, while he was able to visit his son’s grave, the Chens had nowhere they could go to honor Itay as long as he remained in Gaza.

Though he offered criticisms of the Biden administration and its handling of Middle East policy in general, Chen said that he and the other hostage families built a “unique relationship” with senior administration officials including former National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan and CIA Director Bill Burns, who he said they could trust to be honest and comprehensive with them.

That relationship continued with Trump administration officials once they took office.

Meanwhile, Chen was deeply critical of the Israeli government led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and said the other hostage families often struggled to get straight answers from Israeli leaders.

He blasted former Israeli Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer, who spoke at the RJC conference hours before Chen sat down with JI.

“I did not hear an individual that showed any type of remorse or accountability, but actually he looked at it as a win by stating, ‘Oh, we had all the hostages out,’” Chen said of Dermer’s remarks. “You don’t get points when 45 hostages were killed in captivity.”

He accused Dermer and other Israeli officials of trying to hide their own missteps, and emphasized that Dermer “has no accountability and no responsibility” and “was never elected by anyone,” yet rose to a top position in the Israeli government with significant influence over the U.S.-Israel relationship.

Dermer’s appearance came around the two-year anniversary of the day that Hamas

executed six hostages in a tunnel in Rafah, including American Hersh Goldberg-Polin, and Chen criticized him for not making any mention of that grim milestone.

Chen argued that it would be a positive step for Israel to elect a new leader in its upcoming elections, to provide an opportunity for “unity” and a “new chapter,” arguing that Netanyahu should step aside as Prime Minister Golda Meir did after the Yom Kippur War.

“After Oct. 7, the thing that was most needed for the people of Israel was a leader that could provide unity,” he said. “It’s very unfortunate because Netanyahu is a very unique individual that has done a lot of great things, but he is not capable of uniting the people and the polarization in the State of Israel is no less than it was before Oct. 7.”

He said that Meir, in her time, “understood that she couldn’t be part of the solution going forward. That the new chapter that needed to begin ... so she stepped down and allowed the next generation of leaders to come about. I think that’s what the majority of the people in Israel wish to see as well.”

Chen characterized Netanyahu as “incapable” of thinking or planning in the long-term, something that is necessary at the current “inflection point” in the Middle East.

“The president has done a fabulous job in creating that political capital,” Chen said. “The opponents of the State of Israel and the United States [are] at the weakest level. Now is the time to cement that with a political structure that would enable a new chapter to begin for Israel and its neighbors, but also for the benefit of the United States and its economy.”

Chen urged the U.S. administration to “place its bets” and prepare for a scenario in which a new government is elected in Israel, arguing that that could provide an opening for normalization and progress in regional integration.

“I hope that there are some good people in the White House that are thinking about that scenario,” he said. ♦

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Gottheimer, Stefanik launch caucus to combat antisemitism on college campuses

Gottheimer, speaking with Stefanik at Vanderbilt University, praised the Nashville campus for 'getting it right'

By Marc Rod

Reps. Josh Gottheimer (D-NJ) and Elise Stefanik (R-NY) announced that they are launching the Combating Antisemitism on College Campuses Caucus during a visit to Vanderbilt University on Tuesday.

The announcement was made during an event with Vanderbilt Chancellor Daniel Diermeier and the leaders of the University of Kentucky, University of Texas at Austin, Dartmouth College, the University of Alabama and Washington University in St. Louis.

The event, with an audience of Vanderbilt students, faculty, staff and local community members, was focused on highlighting some of the campuses that have, in the view of the organizers, successfully navigated the post-Oct. 7 environment on college campuses, balancing freedom of speech and expression with protecting Jewish students.

"Since October 7th, Jewish students on too many campuses have been harassed, intimidated, and made to feel like strangers in their own school," Gottheimer said in a statement. "That's why Elise and I are teaming up to launch this caucus to hold universities accountable, back up the schools getting it right, like Vanderbilt, and make sure every Jewish kid can have a

college experience without fear of discrimination or violence."

Stefanik, who is retiring at the end of the congressional term, said she has "been proud to be the leader in Congress on combatting antisemitism and anti-Americanism at our colleges and universities."

"I am proud to launch this bipartisan Congressional Caucus with my friend and colleague Representative Josh Gottheimer who has been a leading partner and legislator with whom I have worked on this critical issue. We are committed to saving American higher education for the next generation," she continued.

Stefanik became nationally known for her questioning of university leaders during a congressional hearing about whether calls for the genocide of Jews constituted prohibited harassment on their campuses, and recently published a book about antisemitism on college campuses. The new task force is an outgrowth of that work that has become a focus for Stefanik in recent years.

The caucus, according to the release, aims to serve as a bipartisan forum to coordinate oversight of campus antisemitism; pressure institutions to protect their Jewish communities and enforce existing campus policies; advance

legislation on campus antisemitism including the Antisemitism Awareness Act, the HEAL Act and the anti-Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Protect Economic and Academic Freedom Act; and to elevate schools that have been effective in protecting Jewish students and sharing best practices.

The House already has a broad bipartisan task force on combating antisemitism, which recently helped launch the bipartisan and bicameral Jewish American Security Act.

The new caucus aims to supplement, not stand in place of, the existing task force, by taking a targeted focus, including bringing campus leaders to Capitol Hill and visiting college campuses.

Gottheimer and Stefanik have not yet recruited others to join the task force.

Should Democrats retake the House, the Trump administration's efforts to combat antisemitism are likely to face further scrutiny, as previewed by a recent announcement by Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-MD) that he plans to probe the administration's campus antisemitism investigations, describing the investigations of Harvard, Brown and Columbia Universities as essentially fraudulent. ♦

Israeli NGO that offered ‘Fresh Start’ to those in debt wins inaugural Taib Prize for resilience

The new award comes as part of a rebranding of Haim Taib's philanthropic foundation, as it seeks to increase its domestic impact

By Justin Hayet

The article first appeared in eJewishPhilanthropy.

JAFFA, Israel — The Taib Foundation awarded the first Taib Prize for National Resilience to Daf Hadash, a nonprofit that helps families and businesses climb out of debt, praising the organization's work with military reservists whose finances buckled under prolonged service since the start of the war in Gaza.

The foundation, established by international businessman and philanthropist Haim Taib, launched the prize as an annual honor for people and organizations that strengthen Israel's social fabric and presented the inaugural awards Tuesday evening at the Peres Center for Peace and Innovation in Jaffa.

Tom Faruhi, the CEO of the Taib Foundation, which recently rebranded from the Menomadin Foundation, marked the evening as “next level in our evolution. We want to take our impact to another level.”

“We want to strengthen the nonprofits we support and, in the process, strengthen Israeli society. We want to build bridges between different parts of Israeli society so we can all win together,” Faruhi told *eJewishPhilanthropy*.

Speaking on the sidelines of the event, Taib framed the foundation as an active partner to the groups it supports. “To give money, it's not enough,” he told *eJP*. “It is to be partners with whom you are giving money and together to build [their] idea.”

Taib is an Israeli international businessman and philanthropist who

founded the Mitrelli Group and Taib Group, leading more than 100 infrastructure projects across sub-Saharan Africa. His philanthropy in Israel largely focuses on Israel's peripheral and at-risk communities as a major supporter of efforts like the “Welfare after war” national plan and the Ofakim 2035 recovery blueprint. Last year, Taib was honored as a torch-lighter at Israel's Independence Day ceremony in recognition of his philanthropic work.

The Taib Foundation intends to make the award an annual tradition to boost the profile of nonprofits and practitioners dedicated to strengthening national resilience in Israel.

The judging panel for the Taib Prize was chaired by foundation founder and philanthropist Haim Taib, alongside Yifat Biton, the president of the Achva Academic College of Education and Science; professor Yekoutiel Sabah, a social welfare expert; Dr. Sharon Alroy-Preis, a public health physician; and Sheikh Mohanad Faris, senior educator and community leader. The event was also attended by high-ranking officials across municipalities and ministries.

Daf Hadash, literally “A New Page,” but which operates in English as Fresh Start, works to pull families and businesses out of debt and has pushed to reshape Israel's insolvency system. Since the war began, it has expanded services for reservists and their families who lost income during long stretches of duty. The panel pointed to that mix of individual support and policy change in naming it the winner.

Daf Hadash founder and CEO Tomer Rabinowitz said the group fills a gap for households that fall through the cracks. “When a middle-class family gets into a financial crisis, they have no institutional solution or help,” he told *eJP* at the event. “They would probably be offered to take another loan, as if this is what will solve the problems.”

The organization pairs each family with a financial advisor, alongside legal help, business advice or a loan as needed — and stays with them for three to four months to build stability and healthy financial habits. According to Daf Hadash, about 1 million Israeli households throughout the country, roughly a third, carry some level of debt. “Getting involved in debt doesn't mean you have to reach a financial crisis if you have proper intervention at the beginning,” he said.

The foundation also issued three other awards. It recognized businesswoman Raya Strauss for decades of civic leadership spanning education focusing on the periphery and female advancement. Shaanan Street, lead singer of the band Hadag Nahash, was recognized for being a public voice the panel said builds bridges across Israeli society. Maj. Gen. (res.) Doron Almog, chairman of the Jewish Agency, was honored for strengthening ties between Israel and Diaspora Jewry.

The foundation did not disclose how much Daf Hadash or the individuals recognized received, noting that the point of the evening — of effective philanthropy — is not always about the money. ♦

Former Trump official: U.K. sanctions will render Europe 'less relevant in Middle Eastern affairs'

Most analysts agreed that the British sanctions against Israeli settlements were imposed as a result of pressure from Labour's left-wing base

By Matthew Shea

Former White House officials and diplomats say the U.K. government's decision to slap sweeping new sanctions on Israeli West Bank settlements is primarily a bid to appease far-left political factions in Britain, warning that while the move is unlikely to alter Israeli behavior on the ground, it risks increasing diplomatic friction between London, Jerusalem and Washington.

On Tuesday, U.K. Foreign Secretary Ed Miliband announced the U.K. would institute an import ban on goods produced in settlements, targeted sanctions against individuals and corporate entities involved in constructing, advertising or financing settlement expansion and a ban on events held in the U.K. that promote West Bank real estate.

Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar denounced the step as a "hostile sanctions package" and announced that Israel in response would close the British Consulate in Jerusalem, expel British representatives from the U.S.-backed International Gaza Support Center, terminate the British Support Team in Ramallah tasked with training Palestinian Authority Security Forces and bar 12 British officials, including MP Jeremy Corbyn, accused of "antisemitic and anti-Israel activity."

While the U.S. has not issued an official response, Secretary of State Marco Rubio indicated that Washington will not follow suit, though he refrained from offering explicit condemnation of London's new policy.

Experts told *Jewish Insider* that London's move was predictable given global sentiment toward Israeli settlements, though it's unlikely to shift Israeli policy. Analysts argued the decision was primarily driven by U.K. domestic politics and

warned it could strain relations between Washington and London.

"The poor timing of the U.K. action — days before the Jewish holy days and a few weeks before Israel's election — shows that this move is largely a matter of British domestic politics," Elliott Abrams, former U.S. special envoy during the first Trump administration, told *JI*. "The Labour Party conference is coming, and that was the primary consideration for the British government. This action, and wider European support for it, will not change Israeli conduct, but it will render Europeans even less relevant in Middle Eastern affairs."

Abrams added that the sanctions fail to deliver tangible support to Palestinians while actively damaging Western diplomatic ties.

The U.K. "seem[s] intent on sacrificing their relationship with Israel without doing anything that actually helps Palestinians," Abrams said. "This action will hurt U.S.-U.K. relations in one important way: it demonstrates to U.S. policymakers that Britain's current leadership is not a serious partner."

Jason Greenblatt, former White House Middle East envoy in the first Trump administration, told *JI* that the U.K. is prioritizing "domestic politics ahead of its own security" and warned the decision "helps no one." He predicted the Trump administration is "carefully weighing its response to a badly timed and poorly reasoned decision aimed at an important American ally."

"Punishing Jews for living and trading in the land where Jewish history began more than 3,000 years ago is a terrible decision, and calling it a legal opinion is a farce," Greenblatt said. "No Palestinian will be better off for it, and it will not move the

Israeli-Palestinian conflict one inch. What it does is weaken an important intelligence partner of the United Kingdom in the middle of the war against the Iranian regime."

"Tehran, Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis could not have asked for a better gift," he continued. "Washington raised its concerns before London acted, and London dismissed them."

Edmund Fitton-Brown, a former British diplomat and senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, similarly characterized the move as "political opportunism" framed by domestic electoral pressures.

"It reflects primarily political opportunism on the eve of an important by-election and in the run-up to the Labour Party conference this fall," Fitton-Brown said. "Miliband and Burnham are pandering to nervous backbench MPs and to the red-green alliance within the party. They are afraid of losing votes to the Green Party and 'Gaza-first' independents."

Fitton-Brown noted that the decision marks a sharp escalation from previous Labour policy and carries internal risks for the U.K.

"It is an acceleration of poor choices made by the Starmer government, such as recognizing a Palestinian state last year. It indicates that [British Prime Minister Andy] Burnham and Miliband will take a more hostile stance toward Israel than Starmer did," Fitton-Brown said. "Miliband's public comments leading up to this were particularly aggressive, and the near-unanimous assessment among British Jews is that this makes them less safe."

He added that the sanctions will likely damage U.S.-U.K. relations, referencing criticism from Huckabee and warnings from U.S. lawmakers — such as Rep. Randy

Fine (R-FL) — regarding potential state-level boycotts against the U.K., which other states may replicate.

“The U.K. is damaging its own security — Israel has helped prevent terrorist attacks on British soil over recent years,” Fitton-Brown said. “The U.K. should be concerned about this, as well as facing renewed Argentinian ambitions in the

Falklands, where current U.K. capabilities will struggle to defend the islands without support from key allies, particularly given President Trump’s past equivocation on the issue.”

Simon Henderson, a senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, called the decision “entirely predictable” given international sentiment on the issue.

“Concern about the activities of settler activists whom US Ambassador Huckabee has called terrorists has been widespread in the world,” Henderson said. “We await the responses to the action from London, Europe and Canada by President Trump and Prime Minister Netanyahu.” ♦

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New book 'In the War Room' offers candid look at Netanyahu's wartime decisionmaking

Jerusalem Post military correspondent Yonah Jeremy Bob and Wall Street Journal editorial writer Elliot Kaufman draw on years of interviews with top Israeli leadership

By Haley Cohen

As Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu heads toward what could be one of the most consequential elections of his career next month, a new book is offering an unusually candid look at the decision-making that will define how history — and Israeli voters — judge him.

In the War Room: The Inside Story of Israel's Fight Against Hamas and the Iranian Axis, by Jerusalem Post military correspondent Yonah Jeremy Bob and Wall Street Journal editorial writer Elliot Kaufman, draws on two years of interviews with Israel's political, military and intelligence leadership to reconstruct the internal battles that shaped the war — battles that often pitted Netanyahu against his own defense establishment.

Both Bob and Kaufman criticize some of Netanyahu's choices, from the delayed ground invasion of Gaza to the “unforced error” of the 2025 aid blockade, though each credits him with historic gains against Hezbollah, Iran and Syria.

The authors sat down with *Jewish Insider* on Tuesday, the book's publication day, to talk about what their reporting reveals about Netanyahu's wartime leadership, and what it might mean for how he's remembered at the ballot box.

Jewish Insider: In your view, what is the

most impactful revelation in your book that has not previously been reported on?

Yonah Jeremy Bob: *This is the first book that's an inside story about the war. There are a lot of books about Oct. 7. There hasn't been a book that's covered the full war from the inside. We really got deeply into the beepers and walkie talkies [Israeli operation against Hezbollah] of September 2024. There had been coverage of these issues but in terms of the depth, IDF sources, Mossad sources in Israel, in the U.S., we tell the story — there was actually a debate, should they go first with the beepers or should they go first with the walkie talkies? The things that we learned were stunning: what could have been done differently, how they accomplished it.*

Elliot Kaufman: I would point to just how much it took to convince Prime Minister Netanyahu to launch a ground invasion of Gaza at all. You'd think after Oct. 7, of course, Israeli troops are going to roll into Gaza, but in fact Netanyahu was very hesitant, worrying — with good reason, by the way — that Israeli troops could be walking into a death trap. More than that, he had certain Israeli generals telling him, “Don't do it, the IDF isn't ready.” He had all the top American generals, sent by President [Joe] Biden, telling him the same thing. He really had to gain confidence in the plan. We tell that story, which I think

most people, the way they think about it, would rush right over. But it did take Israel 20 days from the Oct. 7 attack until Oct. 27 to be able to invade Gaza.

JJ: *You write that nearly the entire Israeli defense establishment wanted the war to end well before it actually did. Why did it keep going?*

YJB: This was one of the remarkable things we found in doing this book. At the beginning of the war, you have Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant and most of the Israeli military high command all wanting to invade Gaza faster. The first two rounds [of invasions] the defense chiefs and for some amount of time Benny Gantz, an opposition leader who becomes a war minister, all want to go in and go in faster. Netanyahu is more worried about how things are going to go.

In March/April 2024, it shifts and Netanyahu gains confidence that continuing the war longer will reduce the Hamas threat. The defense establishment is concerned about wear and tear on the military, the opportunity to normalize with the Saudis. If you go back to October 2023, Netanyahu is the one who is most concerned about losing U.S. support, and that shifts. The defense officials become more concerned about losing U.S. support. Summer 2024 the vast majority of the defense establishment wants to end the war

and get all of the hostages back. Netanyahu is thinking he needs to push the war longer to defeat Hamas. He's also afraid he's going to lose his government. For Netanyahu, there's a mix of ideology and politics.

EK: *I would just add that in summer 2024, there were several things in this war that still hadn't happened yet. Israel had not really taken the fight to Hezbollah so that the northern threat was still looming over Israel. You hadn't dealt with Iran and its nuclear program, the 12-day war [with Iran in June 2025] hadn't happened yet. In Gaza, the reason that Israel right now can still hold half of Gaza is because it took some 75% of the territory and then was able to trade that in the final hostage deal, which certainly took me by surprise. I did not think Israel was going to be able to do that. A lot of the most important things in the war actually happened after that point.*

YJB: My understanding based on interviews is that Netanyahu did not have some sort of master plan in extending so that he could take care of Hezbollah at Point A and Iran at Point B. A lot of it sort of ended up being luck. There is a Netanyahu philosophy that sometimes he keeps things going looking for luck.

EK: *Right. Netanyahu understood after the immense failure of Oct. 7 that he needed total victory. The country may have needed it too — but certainly he knew he'd need it if he was ever going to come back from this. So keeping those options open to "solve" the various fronts, yes, that was part of it as well.*

JI: You write that you disagreed as co-authors on terms like "judicial overhaul" versus "judicial reform." How did covering this as a Jerusalem Post military correspondent versus a Wall Street Journal editorial writer lead you two to different readings on the same events? Yonah, you write that some of your personal views were "watered down" through the bipartisan process of co-writing. Can you give an example of an assessment you'd have stated more sharply if you'd written the book alone?

YJB: *There is so little dialogue and debate between people with different views. I hope more people will try to work together in dialogue. I probably would have been more critical about the decision to extend the war*

in summer 2024. Not because I'm sure that would have gotten all of the hostages back — and when we spoke to everyone across the board, including [former National Security Advisor] Jake Sullivan, he wasn't sure either. It was not clear exactly when Hamas would say yes. Even though it's an uncertainty, Netanyahu could have pushed further. Most of the negotiators I spoke to think that he could have cut a deal earlier, the hostages could have come home earlier, Israel's reputation in the world [would maybe be better].

JI: A substantial percentage of Democrats and a small but growing number of Republicans are calling for the U.S. to reduce military support for Israel — which Netanyahu has proposed phasing out completely over the next decade. After reading your book, do you think these elected officials — and their constituents — would be more or less willing to revisit their position and seek to increase military support for the Jewish state?

YJB: *I hope that after reading our book they'll be willing to reconsider their position. I think a lot of the positions in the U.S. right now about Israel, Hamas and Iran are based on emotional considerations, not really understanding the context of the situation. That's not new with Israel but it's a whole different level. I hope people will see that Israel tried very hard to get things right. I hope that whoever is running Israel after Oct. 27, whether it's the same government or a new government, there's been a lack of diplomacy and I hope whoever is running Israel next will lean into diplomacy hard. As important as military power is — and it's very important in this neck of the woods — diplomacy is crucial. If you ignore diplomacy for too long, you can get into the situation Israel is in right now.*

EK: So much of the anti-Israel critique during this war, especially the hardline anti-Israel critique alleging genocide, has succeeded only by systematically covering up Hamas, Hezbollah, Iran and the real military threats that Israel was confronting. If our book can help in one regard to combat that way of looking at it, it is to lift that veil and really show who Israel was fighting and the real military and strategic dilemmas Israel was facing. Once you

seriously engage with those, I don't see how you can look at it and say Israel was just trying to kill Palestinians.

JI: *In the book you criticized Israel's two-month aid blockade in 2025: "Blocking humanitarian aid ... was an unforced error ... It failed to squeeze Hamas ... and led to substantial food insecurity." Do you believe Israel — as an innovation powerhouse — could have come up with better, more novel ways to reduce food insecurity without compromising its own security? Can you offer some examples?*

YJB: I do think Israel could have done better. We highlight in the book that it was one of the largest errors of the war. It's not that there was actually famine in Gaza. There was a fear of famine and a hike of food insecurity. The Israeli government astronomically elevated the amount of food aid. But the fact that it happened at all allowed those who had been critiquing Israel to label Israel with the famine thing. The clearest points, already in 2024, some in the Biden administration suggested neighborhood to neighborhood to put out pilot programs. This was attempted with the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation in mid-2025, but if they had tried it in early 2024 it may have actually succeeded. When they tried it it was too little too late.

EK: *Yup, Israel started too late. It would have been nice to roll out the GHF even a few months earlier instead of waiting to the point food insecurity had risen. Why do it then and start in an impossible situation? When in agreement with the U.S., Israel began facilitating aid to Gaza in October 2023, President Biden announced it saying if Hamas steals the aid it will end. That seemed to make sense. Once that began actually happening, the U.S. response was not that aid will end, it was that aid will increase. Much of Israel's war room raged at the seeming injustice of that. And yet, if Israel wasn't willing to offer a practical alternative, what did they want the Biden administration to say? The only way to keep going was to make sure there wasn't a humanitarian catastrophe. They were constantly shooting themselves in the foot.*

JI: With [former Syrian dictator Bashar al-]Assad gone and Hezbollah weakened,

how real is the opening for a changed Lebanon and Syria?

EK: I remain skeptical that the Lebanese government is going to seize the opportunity, and there are good reasons it doesn't. It's afraid of civil war. However, there are opportunities here for the situation [to improve]. Hezbollah isn't going to be thrown out of the country. But you can have it pressured in different ways. Israel can retain a sort of buffer with the standing offer that when Hezbollah will be seriously disarmed, that territory will be relinquished. Israel has dramatically improved its own security situation. Can Israel save Lebanon? I don't think so. I don't even think America can save Lebanon. Lebanon is going to have to save itself, and that is a much more difficult question.

YJB: Another point is the Lebanese government is working directly with Israel for the first time. That's good. A negative, according to my sources, is the Lebanese army has been less effective now in pushing Hezbollah out than it was in 2025.

The variable is Ahmad al-Sharaa, the leader of Syria. If he is able to change his colors enough from being a jihadist, if he is able to work with Israel on the basis of "my enemy's enemy is my friend," to shut down Hezbollah's ability to rearm, that could be a gamechanger. If he doesn't and Israel and Syria remain hostile, it will be difficult to reduce Hezbollah's threat.

JJ: Turning now to the present campaign against Iran, how long do you believe the

regime can hold out with the "Economic Day" being imposed recently by the Treasury Department on top of the monthslong naval blockade?

YJB: This is one of the most unpredictable points in the last three years of war. It's so complicated. I've been speaking to a ton of high-up Israeli officials and the damage to Iran is real. The regime in many ways has been weakened, and yet at the same time, it would seem like a paradox but the regime is more confident than it's been in years because it has this leverage of the Strait of Hormuz and the nuclear program isn't gone. The ballistic missile program certainly isn't gone.

When you put all of that together, it's a question of who breaks first — the American public who is mad about their gas prices or the Iranians who have a much worse situation but their government doesn't care about how much they suffer. If the regime is willing to let their people suffer, maybe they end up winning the standoff. If Iran gives up first then you can solve the nuclear weapons issue. If the U.S. gives up first it's going to be problematic. There's no easy solution.

EK: If you're Iran looking at the broad sweep of this war — which you were involved in planning, although Hamas didn't consult you on the timing or decision — you would have wanted the war to go very differently. What [late Hamas leader Yahya] Sinwar set in motion, you can see not only Hamas losing half of Gaza and being truly smashed but

Hezbollah losing territory, leadership and its massive missile arsenal. Iran itself is attacked directly multiple times, its nuclear program is in rubble, it's facing its greatest economic pressure it has ever faced, it's under a U.S. naval blockade.

In this recent war, Iran can claim real accomplishments and has gone part of the way to restoring its deterrence. But when you look at that broad sweep, the currency is now trading over 2 million to the dollar — you would have to say this has been a disaster for the Iranian regime, on all fronts. This latest war has not gone as planned for the U.S. or for Israel. And yet, when it looks at the broader Iranian axis I still think we can say it has been substantially weakened. Israeli security is in a much better place vis-à-vis Iran than it was before all of this.

JJ: Anything else you'd like Jewish Insider readers to know about the book?

YJB: One of the things we showed was that this was a complex war. The three central characters for the first 8-13 months — Netanyahu, Gantz and Yallant — sometimes couldn't stand each other and had very different ideologies. The war room shifts, but there's still disagreements. It's harder to paint Israel as this war-mongering country [when you see] that the war room is this complex place with hard decisions. When you see them struggling with those issues, maybe people will be able to humanize Israelis. ♦

SEPTEMBER 9, 2026

Birthright launches Global Business Summit, connecting Diaspora donors, Israeli financial figures

Three-day gathering to take place in November, aimed at showing 'a different face of Israel' to group's funders — and maybe attracting new ones

By Judah Ari Gross

The article first appeared in [eJewishPhilanthropy](#).

Birthright Israel is launching a new Global Business Summit in November in Tel Aviv, connecting

its top donors from the Diaspora and Israel, the organization exclusively told [eJewishPhilanthropy](#).

The gathering, which is scheduled for Nov. 1-3, emerged from regular requests

from donors to learn more about Israel's business landscape and in an effort to more efficiently expose funders to the organization's work, Birthright Israel CEO Gidi Mark told eJP on Wednesday.

Ordinarily, he said, the organization arranges individual tours and visits for donors throughout the year. This way, they can organize one large one for all of them.

“Throughout the year, we do separate tours for our funders, and after we spoke with many of them, they expressed great interest in meeting with their Israeli counterparts, who are also donors to Birthright,” Mark said. “So we said, let’s do one day of showing them tours and around areas that are connected to Birthright, and one day of introducing them to what the Israeli economy has to offer. Because the Israeli economy can also benefit from stronger connections to business leaders from around the world.”

The invite-only summit will feature several of Birthright Israel’s largest donors from Israel and abroad — most notably Dr. Miriam Adelson — as well as British investor Sir Ronald Cohen; Eyal Waldman, founder of Mellanox; Amit Krig, NVIDIA-Israel site leader and senior vice president of networking software; former Mossad director Yossi Cohen; investor and ICON

founder Yasmin Lukatz; former Microsoft Israel CEO Shelly Landsmann; author Micah Goodman; entrepreneur Yoel Cheshin; real-estate developer Danna Azrieli Hakim; and Angela Homsy, co-founder and president of Ignite Power.

The three-day event will open with a gala recognizing the organization’s supporters, featuring remarks from Israeli President Isaac Herzog. This will be followed by a day of speeches and discussions from top Israeli business leaders and public figures. On the final day, the roughly 350 participants will visit volunteering sites, meeting Birthright Israel participants and the communities where they have been volunteering since the Oct. 7 terror attacks.

The organizers said that the summit will also highlight the financial impact that Birthright Israel has had since it launched 26 years ago, contributing an estimated \$2.6 billion to the Israeli economy, through hotel stays, bus rentals, tour guides, restaurant meals and site visits, among other things.

“Combining business and purpose has

been my life mission, and this first Birthright Israel Business Summit is the culmination of 26 years of impact on nearly one million lives and tens of thousands of supporters from around the world,” Ethy Levy, Birthright Israel’s vice president of global resource development and partnerships, said in a statement. “It is our way to give back to our supporters by providing an exclusive and intimate platform for networking, doing business and doing good together.”

Most of the participants and the presenters are existing Birthright Israel donors, Mark said, and the event is primarily aimed at supporting and educating them, but he acknowledged that bringing together some of Israel’s and the world’s top business leaders will also likely attract new funders.

“The main goal is showing a different face of Israel to our existing funders,” he said. “But, of course, I assume that this will bring us some new donors.” ♦