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SERVING THE MEMPHIS JEWISH COMMUNITY SINCE 1925

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# MHA-FYOS Installs Dr. Mark Kaplowitz as Board President and Dedicates the Ira Weinstein Wing



Newly installed Board President Dr. Mark Kaplowitz, Head of School Rabbi Dr. Gavriel Brown and outgoing President Dr. Deena Davidovics.

By Jessica Baum Sukhodolsky

The Margolin Hebrew Academy-Feinstone Yeshiva of the South held its annual Patrons Meeting and Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast on Sunday, July 21 in the Irby and Bernice Cooper Beit Midrash. This year’s meeting included a special dedication of the Ira Weinstein Wing in the Cooper Yeshiva High School for Boys.

The morning began with words of Torah from MHA eighth grader Abby Lewis, who spoke about the spiritual meaning she finds in tefila, and an address from outgoing President of the Board Dr. Deena Davidovics. Dr. Davidovics reviewed the past school year and thanked all the board members, teachers, administrators and families for their support throughout her term. She

remarked that the school is in an excellent position going forward.

“Here in Memphis, the foundation of our community is our school, the Margolin Hebrew Academy Feinstone Yeshiva of the South,” she said. “Each of those who have supported the MHA-FYOS, from its founding builders and leaders to all of you seated here today, have created a lasting legacy built on Torah for our entire community.”

Dr. Davidovics then called upon Dr. Marc Weinstein and MHA-FYOS past President Josh Kahane to pay tribute to Dr. Ira Weinstein. Dr. Marc Weinstein stated, “My father, Ira Weinstein, was an excellent role model for his sons who, in their own ways, have each followed in his footsteps to make the world



Dr. Joe Weinstein, Dr. Marc Weinstein, David Weinstein and Debby Weinstein proudly dedicate the Ira Weinstein Wing.

a better place by being active in their communities. It is very fitting that this wing is named in memory of my father since he considered Jewish education to be the greatest value, because it ensures that yidishkeit and love of Israel will be passed onto the following generations.”

Mr. Kahane echoed the sentiment by sharing, “Cindi and Joe Weinstein have followed in the footsteps of their parents, Debbie and Ira, in being visionary communal leaders. With their unwavering passion, generosity and commitment they are always amongst those who make possible the initiatives and projects that ensure the continuity of Jewish education in Memphis and the vibrancy of our Jewish community.”

The renovation of the Ira Weinstein Wing, which houses the Cooper Beit Midrash, was brought to fruition through the generous financial support of Dr. Joe and Cindi Weinstein and a matching grant from the Cooper family.

Following the dedication, Memphis Jewish Foundation Board Chair and MHA-FYOS past President Pace Cooper gave a presentation to attendees on Legacy Giving, after which Aileen Cooper, past president and chair of the board nominating committee, presented the 2024-2025 slate of officers. Retiring board member Penina Wender was recognized for her years of service to

(See MHA/FYOS Page 3)

# Joe Biden Calls Himself a Zionist and Loves Name-Dropping Golda Meir. His Exit Marks an End of an Era.



By Ron Kampeas

(JTA) – If there is one story that defines Joe Biden’s relationship with Israel, it is the famous Golda Meir anecdote.

At an Israeli Embassy Independence Day bash in 2015, the then-vice president told the story he had been telling for 42 years.

He was a neophyte Delaware senator

President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu embrace on the tarmac at Ben Gurion Airport, Oct. 18, 2023. Credit: Avi Ohayon, Israel Government Press Office

in the fall of 1973, barely 30 years old. She was the wizened, chain-smoking prime minister. He conveyed to her his sense that Israel’s enemies were about to launch a war. She seemed pessimistic, too. (The attack that launched the Yom Kippur War would surprise Israel within days.) She asked him if he wanted to pose for a photograph. They stepped outside of her office.

“She said, ‘Senator, you look so worried,’” he said. “I said, ‘Well, my God, madame prime minister,’ and I turned to look at her. I said, ‘The picture you

(See Biden Page 2)



Biden...

(Continued From Page 1)

paint.’ She said, ‘Oh, don’t worry. We have’ – I thought she only said this to me. She said, ‘We have a secret weapon in our conflict with the Arabs. You see, we have no place else to go.’”

The 2015 speech was aimed at assuaging tensions between his boss, President Barack Obama, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over the Iran nuclear deal Obama was brokering that year.

But buried toward the end of the speech was a prophecy, made by a vice president and fulfilled by the same man once he became president: America would bring its military might to bear on Israel’s behalf, if it came to that.

“We’ll never stop working to ensure that Jews from around the world always have somewhere to go,” he said. “We’ll never stop working to make sure Israel has a qualitative edge. And whomever the next President is – Republican or Democrat – it will be the same because the American people, the American people are committed. The American people understand.”

In 2023, President Biden made good on that promise: literally embracing Netanyahu in the wake of the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas, and pledging, “As long as the United States stands – and we will stand forever – we will not let you ever be alone.”

Over the next nine months and the war that followed those attacks, that pledge has been tested, with the administration withholding large bombs from Israel’s arsenal and warning repeatedly that the counterattack that by now has killed nearly 40,000 Palestinians was in danger of going too far.

The war cost Biden political capital across the board: a rebellion among pro-Palestinian voters who voted “uncommitted” in various state primaries, and anger from the right and the kinds of pro-Israel interests who consider anything but a full green light to Israel a betrayal of America’s closest ally in the Middle East.

For nearly his entire political career Biden represented the once-mainstream Democratic view of Israel: When Obama was pressuring Israel over Iran and other matters, veteran Mid-east peace broker Dennis Ross said at the time, Netanyahu “understood that Biden would disagree with him on a lot of things but never questioned Biden’s basic friendship.”

Biden has long identified as a Zionist, including a nod to that identity as recently as last week, when he said, “You don’t have to be a Jew to be a Zionist, and a Zionist is about whether or not Is-

rael is a safe haven for Jews because of their history of how they’ve been persecuted.” He also said he believed many people did not know the term, which pro-Palestinian voices have increasingly used as a pejorative.

Biden’s relationship with Israel dates back to that visit in 1973. It’s a personal history that makes him something of the last of a breed.

“There’s hardly anyone out there who was in the U.S. government in 1973 and is still involved in politics in 2020,” said David Makovsky, a member of the Obama administration team that tried in 2013 and 2014 to broker an Israeli-Palestinian peace and is now at the Washington Institute, in a 2020 interview. “He remembers an Israel that is not just a startup nation but facing wars.”

By withdrawing from the presidential race, after an agonizing few weeks of defiance and indecision, Biden at last became the bridge to the next generation that he once pledged to be. But it appears unlikely that another Democratic president will ever have his generational and personal attachment to Israel – while the Democratic platform staunchly supports Israel, and most Democratic lawmakers do, too, anti-Israel sentiment is on the rise among younger Americans and within the progressive wing of the Democratic Party. And even some mainstream Democrats have, in the context of the war, entertained policies that previously had been off-limits, such as conditioning aid to Israel.

Vice President Kamala Harris, a front-runner to replace Biden at the top of the ticket, has stoked worries among pro-Israel voters for appearing to be more vocal than Biden in calling out what the administration sees as the oversteps of Netanyahu.

In March, she was the first administration official to call for an “immediate” ceasefire, and used tough language to describe demands on Israel to allow in humanitarian aid.

“No excuses,” Harris said. “They must open new border crossings. They must not impose any unnecessary restrictions on the delivery of aid. They must ensure humanitarian personnel, sites, and convoys are not targeted.”

Harris, who drew Biden’s endorsement last Sunday when he exited the race, is married to a Jewish man, Doug Emhoff, who has been a vocal advocate against antisemitism during his stint as second gentleman. Emhoff’s first trip to Israel was in 2017, when he traveled with his wife, then a California senator.

A range of Israeli politicians referred to Biden’s long record of support when

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8/1/2024



Memphis Candlelighting Time

Erev Shabbat, Fri. August 2, 2024 / 27 Tammuz, 5784 ..... 7:43 p.m.  
Havdalah, Sat. August 3, 2024 / 28 Tammuz, 5784 ..... 8:41 p.m.

Weekly Torah Portion: Matot-Masei

responding to his exit – though Netanyahu, who met with Biden during a Washington visit last week, did not immediately issue a statement.

“President Biden is a true friend of Israel who stood by us in our most difficult moments,” tweeted the former Prime Minister Naftali Bennett. “During my tenure as Prime Minister, I witnessed his unwavering support of the State of

Israel. Thank you for everything.”

A left-wing former lawmaker, Stav Shaffir, tweeted, “President Biden, you will be remembered as one of the greatest leaders of our time. Thank you for your unwavering support of our country, your tireless efforts to safeguard democracy, your courage and responsibility. The world desperately needs more leaders like you.” HW

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MHA/FYOS...  
(Continued From Page 1)

the school, and Devra Becker and Benji Mehler were elected to their first term on the board. Also elected were Jonathan Wogan, first vice president; Tracey Mendelson and Stacy Sanderson, vice presidents; Sarah Ardestani and Danielle Levine, co-secretaries; and Richard Lewis and Emily Lennon, co-treasurers. Dr. Mark Kaplowitz was elected president.

In assuming the office of president, Dr. Kaplowitz remarked that, “as we stand today at the beginning of the 75th year of the Margolin Hebrew Academy-Feinstein Yeshiva of the South, we, too, are experiencing a leadership transition as we welcome Rabbi Dr. Gavriel Brown as our new head of school. Among our goals for this year are to celebrate our 75th anniversary by connecting with our memories of our school’s founders. We hope to continue to recognize the many generations of Memphians, the families who have sustained and built our school over the decades, and we seek to prepare for our school’s future through our united efforts to create a framework for

continued growth and improvement.” Rabbi Dr. Gavriel Brown addressed the gathering as well. After acknowledging Dr. Davidovics’s dedication as president and applauding the tireless efforts of the school’s head of school search committee chairs, he shared that, “my vision for the school is the vision that it has for itself: to have outstanding Judaic and General studies, to support and empower a great faculty, to partner with parents, to ingrain menschlichkeit into the foundation of our work. Let us continue to grow together, rooted in our values, nourished by Torah, guided by the lay leaders gathered here today, led by the excellent team at the school.”

As the dedicated teachers and staff of MHA-FYOS are excited for the school’s diamond jubilee, the building is abuzz with excitement for an incredible school year. If you haven’t visited the MHA-FYOS lately, now is the perfect time! Please email [jessica.baum@mhafyos.org](mailto:jessica.baum@mhafyos.org) or call 901-682-2400 to schedule a tour. **HW**

Declutter 1-2-3

Featuring Stacy Saed at the MJCC  
Wednesday, August 14, 2024, at 7 p.m.

Whether it is a move to a new location, a scale down to a senior living community or reviving an existing home, Stacy has you covered. Learn tips on how to declutter your own environment.

Reservations are required as space is limited. Stacy gave this talk in October and was asked to come back. Everyone left with great information. There is no charge. Call the front desk at the MJCC 901-761-0810 to register. **HW**



Stacy Saed

The MJCC Larisa and Ben Baer Senior Adult Club Happenings

Lunch is Monday–Friday at 11:30 a.m. All programs start at 12:15 p.m.  
Monthly Luncheon is at noon.

Monday, August 5  
Field Trip to Opus Elegant Senior Living

A group of MJCC seniors toured Opus when it first opened, however, several have asked to go back and get a fresh look. Opus has Independent Living Cottages, Independent Living and Memory Care Facilities. Opus was recently opened on Cherry Road, near Park Avenue. The cost is \$2 for the roundtrip bus ride and \$2 for the daily lunch. As space is limited, please call the front desk to make reservations for the lunch and tour.

Wednesday, August 7  
Speaker: Josh Goldin, account executive with Hope Hospice and Palliative Care.

Topic: Aging in Place  
Josh made this presentation over a year ago, and many requested this program again. There will be many tips and a handout that will help seniors age where they live. Reservations are required for the lunch only.

Please join us Monday through Friday for a delicious kosher lunch from the kitchens at the Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab. The cost is only \$2 for seniors. Reservations are required the day before by 1 p.m. by contacting Steve Kaplan, Adult Services Coordinator, at 901-259-9220 or [stevekaplan@jccmemphis.org](mailto:stevekaplan@jccmemphis.org) or by calling the front desk at 901-761-0810. Steve works Monday thru Thursday 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. **HW**

Jerusalem Warns Paris of Iran-Backed Plan to Strike Israeli Olympians

(JNS) – Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz sent a message to French Foreign

Monday, August 12  
Speaker: Tim Flesner with Home Helpers

Topic: Stroke Prevention  
Strokes continue to be a growing problem among seniors. Come hear this informative talk that will include a handout about how one can minimize the risk. No registration is needed for this program.

Wednesday, August 14  
Rabbi Talk with Rabbi Abe Schacter-Gampel

Topic: Rabbi Herschel Schacter, Helping Liberate Buchenwald!

Rabbi Herschel Schacter was Rabbi Abe’s grandfather who helped to liberate the infamous concentration camp. The Buchenwald concentration camp was constructed in 1937 about five miles northwest of the city of Weimar in East-Central Germany. Come hear this heartfelt program.

Minister Stéphane Séjourné last Thursday, one day before the launch of the Olympic Games in Paris, warning of an Iranian threat to Israeli athletes.

“We have intelligence indicating that Iranian operatives and other terrorist groups are planning to target members of the Israeli delegation and Israeli tourists,” said Katz, according to Israel’s public broadcaster, Kan News.

Katz thanked French President Emmanuel Macron and the French foreign minister for the unprecedented security preparations that have been put in place for the games, which officially began on Friday.

He also commended French efforts to confront inciting elements attempting to undermine the legitimacy of Israel’s participation at the Olympics.

“I deeply appreciate your and President Macron’s unequivocal condemnation of the recent inflammatory rhetoric against Israeli athletes in Paris,” he said.

He also expressed gratitude for being offered the opportunity to host a memorial ceremony for the 11 athletes and coaches murdered during the 1972 Munich Olympics, to be held at the Foreign Ministry in Paris.

Israel’s ambassador to France, Joshua Zarka, told Kan Reshet Bet last week that the “Olympics are taking place in a threatening climate.”

“We are at war and facing an enemy supported by Iran. But the French give us full security and treat us in the best way possible,” he said.

Referring to remarks by left-wing French Parliament member Thomas Portes of the France Unbowed Party, who called at a demonstration [week before last] for French people to mobilize against the Israeli athletes, Zarka said lawsuits had been filed against the MP. He added that “the French government made it clear unequivocally that all Israeli athletes are welcome and safe in France.” **HW**

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# Archeologists Uncover Floor of the Great Synagogue of Vilna, Destroyed by the Nazis and Soviets



**Jon Seligman of the Israel Antiquities Authority stands on the colorful floor of the main prayer hall of the Great Synagogue of Vilna, which was destroyed by the Nazis and has been undergoing excavation since 2015. Credit: Israel Antiquities Authority**

By Shira Bartov

(JTA) – A new excavation has unearthed parts of the Great Synagogue of Vilna, once the oldest and most important building for Lithuanian Jews before it was destroyed by the Nazis and razed by the Soviets. Archeologists found the synagogue floor decorated with red, black and white flowers, along with the remains of a vibrant wall painted in red and blue, they said. They also uncovered part of

the women’s gallery, water reservoirs used for the mikvah (or ritual bath) and a large pillar that once flanked the bimah (or prayer platform), now collapsed on its side. This latest excavation is the fifth in a series that began in 2015, when a ground-penetrating radar first traced remnants of the synagogue. Previous sessions revealed the bimah, the Torah ark and Torah scroll and a Hebrew inscription. The

project is led by the Israel Antiquities Authority, the Association of Lithuanian Archeology, the Good Will Foundation and Lithuania’s Jewish community. “The magnificent remains we are discovering – the synagogue bimah that was uncovered during the previous excavation seasons, as well as the colorful decorations of the floor and walls – bring back moments in the life of a lost vibrant community,” said the excavation directors, Jon Seligman of the Israel Antiquities Authority and Justinas Rakas of the Lithuanian Archeological Society, in a statement. The Great Synagogue of Vilna, now known as Vilnius in Lithuania, was built in the 17th century in a Renaissance-Baroque style and formed the heart of a thriving Jewish community. Before the Holocaust, the synagogue was surrounded by a complex filled with Jewish life, including 12 synagogues, study houses, kosher meat stalls, a bath-house and the famous Strashun Library,

one of the most important Jewish cultural institutions in Eastern Europe before its destruction in World War II. Lithuania’s Jews had a distinct culture, including their own dialect of Yiddish, and played a profound role in developing Jewish thought. Vilnius attracted many celebrated Yiddish writers and scholars, earning it a nickname as the “Jerusalem of the North.” During the Holocaust, the Nazis killed over 90% of Lithuanian Jews and looted and burned the Great Synagogue. After Lithuania came under Communist control, Soviet authorities demolished the synagogue’s remnants in the 1950s and built a school on its site. Soviet rule, which lasted until 1990, delayed any reckoning with the country’s Holocaust history, both the destruction wrought by the Nazis and the role that local collaborators played. Only in the last few years has the country allocated any funding to survivors of the Holocaust in Lithuania. **HW**

## In Heated Interview, Roger Waters Denies Hamas Rapes

(Israel Hayom via JNS) – Roger Waters has ignited a firestorm of controversy for denying that Hamas terrorists raped Israeli women during their brutal onslaught on Oct. 7, despite ample evidence to the contrary. In a combative interview with British journalist Piers Morgan, the former Pink Floyd bassist insisted that, “There’s no evidence of that,” to which Morgan swiftly countered, “The truth is there is, and even the U.N. has evidence.” The United Nations confirmed in May that Hamas terrorists perpetrated sexual violence on Oct. 7. Similarly, while being interrogated by the IDF, a Hamas terrorist confessed to raping an Israeli woman during the massacre, as did his father and cousin. In addition, Amit Soussana, who was held in Gaza for 55 days after being

abducted from her home on Oct. 7, recounted the horrific sexual assault she endured while in captivity in a chilling testimony to “The New York Times.” The tension escalated further as Waters expressed skepticism about Hamas’s abduction of infants and seniors. When the conversation turned to Kfir Bibas, who at nine months old was the youngest Israeli hostage taken on Oct. 7 along with his mother, Shiri, and four-year-old brother Ariel, Waters falsely claimed the infant had been released in a hostage exchange. Morgan corrected him, stating, “Kfir Bibas has not been released.” Visibly agitated, Waters shot back, “You’re making that up.” Further challenging, Waters posed a provocative question: “Wouldn’t it be great if there was a real investigation to debunk all the disgusting lies the Israelis

told after Oct. 7?” When pressed by Morgan to provide examples, Waters cited “burning babies and raping women.” As Morgan insisted, “The truth is women were indeed raped,” Waters remained steadfast in his denial, reiterating, “There is no evidence of that.” Waters’s stance has put him at odds not only with many fans and public figures but also with former bandmates. David Gilmour, his one-time collaborator in Pink Floyd, has publicly rebuked Waters’s comments, saying that they tarnish the band’s legacy. Other music industry titans, including Mick Jagger and Elton John, have also denounced Waters’s statements, declaring that his views cross ethical boundaries and that antisemitism has no place in the world of music. The Campaign Against Antisemitism

group tweeted, “There have been numerous accounts of the horrific sexual violence carried out by Hamas on 7th October and against the hostages in Gaza. Roger Waters flat-out denies that women were raped. This truly makes for a nauseating viewing.” The explosive interview marks the latest chapter in Waters’s long history of antisemitic and anti-Israel statements. His comments have previously triggered a wave of condemnation from Israeli politicians and Jewish organizations worldwide. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu described Waters’s rhetoric as baseless and full of hate. Representatives from prominent groups such as the Anti-Defamation League and the Center for the Study of Antisemitism have not only condemned his statements but also called for a boycott of his performances. **HW**

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## Your Health Who Takes Care of the Caregiver?

By Cindy Katz, Nurse Practitioner

Caregivers dedicate their time, energy and emotional resources to caring for others. This role often involves physical and emotional stress, sometimes at the expense of their own health and well-being, especially when caring for elderly parents, children with special needs or patients in healthcare settings. Caregiving is demanding, involving long hours, physical labor and emotional strain. It can lead to burnout, depression and isolation. It can contribute to health issues like chronic stress, anxiety and insomnia. Often in the clinic, we see caregivers, such as a worn-out spouse or adult child exhausted both emotionally and physically from caring for their family member. One notable case involved a couple in their 80s. The husband had developed Parkinson’s disease, and his wife, who was in good health, took on the role as caregiver. She assisted him with daily activities including bathing and dressing each morning. She did all the shopping, meal planning and driving him to his doctor’s appointments. As his health declined, she worked tirelessly to ensure all his needs were met and to keep him happy. Their adult children, who lived in other cities, could only occasionally help, leaving her with the sole responsibility for many

months. Tragically, when we received a call from their son about a family member’s death, it was not surprising to learn that it was their mother who had passed away. She suffered a stroke and did not survive, a scenario all too common when caregivers neglect their own health. What can the caregiver do to handle the additional responsibilities and stress? It is crucial for caregivers to seek help and support! • Lighten your load by asking for assistance from family members and friends. • Reach out to your place of worship; many congregations offer support groups for caregivers. You can also ask for guidance from your rabbi or other religious leaders. • Look into technological systems, such as medical alert systems, telehealth services and government organizations to help manage caregiving. • Check our Respite Care, which provides temporary relief for caregivers. Visit the website ARCH National Respite Locator Service to find resources in your area. Self-care is a necessary part of a caregiver’s routine. This includes maintaining a healthy diet, exercising regularly, ensuring adequate sleep and engaging in activities that promote relaxation. **HW**



# Families of U.S. Hostages Optimistic after Meeting with Biden, Netanyahu



U.S. President Joe Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu meet with the families of American hostages held by Hamas on July 25, 2024. Credit: Amos Ben Gershon/GPO.

By Mike Wagenheim

(JNS) – Family members of American hostages held in Gaza said, after meeting with U.S. President Joe Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, that they feel more than they have in months that a deal for a ceasefire and the return of their loved ones is in reach.

“What we did find by the end of the meeting, which was productive and honest, is that we feel probably more optimistic than we have since the first round of releases in late November, early December,” when hostages were released as part of a temporary ceasefire,

said Jonathan Dekel-Chen.

Dekel-Chen’s 35-year-old son Sagui Dekel-Chen is being held in Gaza. The Dekel-Chen family is one of six – out of seven – families with U.S. hostages being held in Gaza that participated in last Thursday’s meeting at the White House.

Adi and Yael Alexander (parents of Edan Alexander); Ruby and Hagit Chen (parents of Itay Chen); Ronen and Orna Neutra (parents of Omer Neutra); Liz Naftali (great-aunt of Abigail Mor Edan); Aviva Siegel and Elan Tiv Siegel (wife and daughter, respectively, of Keith Sie-

gel); and Jon Polin and Rachel Goldberg (parents of Hersch Goldberg-Polin) were the other participants, according to the Israeli Prime Minister’s Office.

Biden was joined in the meeting by National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, U.S. Ambassador to Israel Jack Lew, and National Security Council coordinator for Middle East and North Africa Brett McGurk, among others. Alongside Netanyahu were Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer and Israeli Ambassador to the United States Michael Herzog, among others.

“We got an absolute commitment from the Biden administration and from Prime Minister Netanyahu that they understand the urgency of this moment now, to waste no time and to complete this deal as it currently stands, with as little change as humanly possible,” Dekel-Chen told reporters.

The families insisted that they could not go into details about what they heard in the meeting that made them so optimistic.

Rachel Goldberg told reporters that she thought that Biden bowing out of the presidential race [last] Sunday will help – rather than his “lame duck” status harming – the chances of reaching an agreement.

“I actually think it allows the president to be laser focused on the things that are true priorities to him,” Goldberg said. “Saving human beings, cherished human beings – 115 of them, eight of whom are U.S. citizens – is one para-

mount issue for him.”

“I think not having to worry about all the things surrounding a re-election allows him the freedom to focus on this, and we wish him godspeed in that task,” Goldberg added.

Dekel-Chen said that the fact that Biden and any future U.S. president believe in the urgency of the deal is an invaluable asset.

“We’ve got a rare moment now where the current president of the United States and anybody who might become president of the United States – both Vice President Harris and Donald Trump – are all aligned in saying this deal must get done now,” he said.

“Anybody on any side who makes the mistake in political calculus that there’s benefit in waiting will find out that that logic is wrong,” Dekel-Chen added.

Naftali, whose great niece was released last year, told reporters that the relationship between Netanyahu and Biden was “sometimes rocky,” but now “it is solid.”

“Right now you see that these two men understand that the hostages need to be released,” she said. “They also understand that the fighting needs to stop. So when you ask that question about where we are, think about this: you have the President of the United States Joe Biden and Prime Minister Bibi Netanyahu coming together for a meeting and then inviting us and listening to us and sharing with us and committing to us the rapid return of our hostages.” **HW**



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# Dozens of Israelis Flock to Hospitals Amid ‘Brain-Eating Amoeba’ Scare

JNS Staff

(JNS) – Hospitals in northern Israel were reporting the arrival of dozens of patients last Thursday morning after the country’s Health Ministry ordered the immediate closure of a water park following two recent cases of infection by a rare amoeba.

Northern medical centers reported that “more than 70 individuals who visited Gai Beach, both symptomatic and asymptomatic, have sought medical attention at northern hospitals. All those examined were found to be healthy and without symptoms, and were subsequently discharged,” according to “Isra-

el Hayom.”

David Ratner, spokesman for Rambam Hospital in Haifa, told JNS last Thursday that there was “a lot of panic,” with 10 children and 10 adults checking in and being released. “Other northern hospitals received even more,” he added.

A 10-year-old Israeli has been hospitalized with encephalitis caused by Naegleria fowleri, aka the “brain-eating amoeba.” The boy is sedated and on a respirator at Ziv Medical Center in Safed.

He was the second patient diagnosed

with encephalitis as a result of fowleri infection after staying at the water park. The amoeba was detected in a 26-year-old man who died earlier this month. The death was the second case of fowleri infection ever reported in Israel.

The ministry ordered the park’s closure last Wednesday night “for precautionary reasons.” In addition, the ministry is asking anyone who spent time at the park in the last two weeks to seek medical help at the nearest emergency room if they experience fever, headache, blurred vision or vomiting.

A Health Ministry directive last

Thursday afternoon clarified the previous announcement, reminding patients to contact their HMO call center for a referral before going to the emergency room.

“The ministry directed the health insurance funds so that a referral is given to anyone who was at the water park at Gai Beach in the last two weeks and experienced these symptoms,” said Shira Solomon, Health Ministry spokeswoman.

The amoeba thrives in waters ranging from 35 to 42 degrees Celsius (95 to 108 degrees Fahrenheit) and infects humans only in rare cases. [HW](#)

# Netanyahu Calls for ‘NATO-Style’ Regional ‘Abraham Alliance’ to Confront Iran



The special plaques given to diplomats from the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco, Jordan and Egypt at the second anniversary of the signing of the Abraham Accords at the Israeli Embassy in Washington on Sept. 15, 2022. Credit: Courtesy of the Israeli Embassy in Washington D.C.

By Alex Traiman

(JNS) – Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made a call for a regional defense alliance of nations to confront Iran in the Middle East.

He said it should include countries that “have made peace with Israel and those that will make peace with Israel” to confront Iran’s malign influence, spread of terrorism and military-grade nuclear ambitions.

Netanyahu said the region already “saw a glimpse of that alliance” on April 13, when Iran fired more than 300 missiles and explosive drones from its own territory towards Israel. A coalition of countries led by Israel and the United States, but also including Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt, participated for a period of several hours to neutralize the threat.

The Israeli prime minister thanked U.S. President Joe Biden “for bringing that alliance together.”

In a briefing with the Israeli press delegation after his congressional speech last Wednesday afternoon, Netanyahu compared such a cohort to a “NA-

TO-style alliance.” During the address, he said the unified group “would be a security coalition in every sense of the word.”

He said it would essentially be “an extension of the groundbreaking Abraham Accords,” which included normalization agreements signed in the fall of 2020 between Israel, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco and Sudan. And he suggested that the pact be called the “Abraham Alliance.”

Israel would likely attempt to recruit Saudi Arabia to join an alliance, whether or not Israel succeeds in signing a formal normalization agreement with the Sunni kingdom.

In his address, Netanyahu noted that Israel is currently fighting a war on multiple fronts against Hamas, Hezbollah and Houthis, all terrorist proxies funded and armed by Tehran, and even by Iran itself.

“In the Middle East,” Netanyahu said, “Iran is virtually 377 behind all the terrorism, all the turmoil, all the chaos, all the killing.” [HW](#)

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# Donald Trump Thanks Mahmoud Abbas for Concern after Assassination Attempt



President Donald Trump giving a joint statement with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas in the Roosevelt Room of the White House, May 3, 2017. Credit: Olivier Douliery-Pool/Getty Images

By Ron Kampeas

(JTA) – WASHINGTON – Donald Trump told Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian Authority president, that it was “so nice” to get his good wishes after Trump survived an assassination attempt, a notably friendly gesture ahead

of a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has long worked to marginalize Abbas.

“It is with grave concern that I have received news and later on watched footage of your attempted assassination,” Abbas wrote Trump on official letterhead in a letter dated July 14, one day after the shooting. “Acts of violence must not have a place in a world of law and order.”

“Mahmoud – so nice – thank you – everything will be good,” Trump wrote in marker on Abbas’ letter, which Trump posted last Tuesday evening on social media. “Best wishes, Donald Trump.”

The correspondence was notable because relations between Abbas and Trump soured after Trump, as president, recognized Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, which Abbas took as an affront, because Palestinians consider east Jerusalem their capital. They deteriorated further after Trump endorsed a peace plan that retained Israeli control over large swaths of the West Bank.

Netanyahu and his allies in the Trump administration also worked to persuade Trump to cut off the Palestinian Authority, saying it was malign and ineffective. Posting the letter on social media could be seen as a signal that Trump’s stance has shifted – a fear among traditional pro-Israel Republicans who otherwise are completely on board in helping him return to office.

Trump’s post noted his meeting last Friday with Netanyahu, set to take place in Mar-a-Lago. “Looking forward to seeing Bibi Netanyahu on Friday, and even more forward to achieving Peace in the Middle East!” it said, and signed off with his initials, “DJT.”

Netanyahu spoke last Wednesday to Congress and effusively praised both Biden and Trump. His government has in recent months stepped up its efforts to isolate the Palestinian Authority, rejecting efforts by the Biden administration to have the authority assume some level of control of the Gaza Strip once Israel’s war with Hamas ends in the enclave. [HW](#)

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## Do You Need to Adjust Your Tax Withholding?

*Provided by Mike Stein, Managing Director - Investments  
Wells Fargo Advisors  
Questions for Mike? You can reach him at 901.761.8151  
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fa.wellsfargoadvisors.com/michael-stein*

Once you’ve filed last year’s tax return and can see where your finances are headed this year, it may be a good time to adjust your income tax withholding to help make sure you’re having the right amount withheld from your paycheck.

Tax withholding is a balancing act. If you have too much tax withheld, you will receive a refund when you file your income tax return. If you prefer to receive more in your paycheck, you will need to reduce your withholding. However, if you have too little tax withheld, you will owe tax when you file your tax return and might owe a penalty.

Two tools – IRS Form W-4 and the Tax Withholding Estimator on irs.gov – can be used to help figure out the right amount of federal income tax to have withheld from your paycheck. Using these can be beneficial when tax laws change, your filing status changes, you start a new job, or you have other major life changes. You might make a special effort to review your withholding if any of the following situations apply:

- Filing as a two-income family
- Holding more than one job at the same time
- Working for only part of the year
- Claiming credits, such as the child tax credit
- Itemizing deductions
- Having a high income and a complex return

#### How to adjust your withholding

Your employer will withhold tax from your paycheck based on the information you provide on Form W-4 and the IRS withholding tables. In some cases, you will need to give your employer a new Form W-4 within 10 days of a change in personal circumstances (for example, if the number of allowances you are al-

lowed to claim is reduced or your filing status changes from married to single). In other cases, you can submit a new Form W-4 whenever you wish. See IRS Publication 505 for more information.

If you have a large amount of non-wage income, such as interest, dividends, or capital gains, you might want to increase the tax withheld or claim fewer allowances. In this situation, also consider making estimated tax payments using IRS Form 1040-ES.

You can claim exemption from federal tax withholding on Form W-4 if both of these situations apply: (1) in the prior tax year, you were entitled to a refund of all federal income tax withheld because you had no tax liability, and (2) for the current year, you expect a refund of all federal income tax withheld because you anticipate having no tax liability.

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## “Jews in Magic:” Reviving a 1933 History Book by Guenther Dammann



*Magic (illustration).  
Credit: The Fairy Path/  
Pixabay.*

publication date in Germany, he suspected a work of antisemitism. However, decades later, Hatch said, “I realized that the book was about the great contributions that Jews have made to magic.”

The title includes short biographies of more than 50 Jewish magicians, including escape artist Harry Houdini and 19th-century illusionist Alexander Herrmann, who performed for President Abraham Lincoln. Dammann became interested in magic at 12 or 13 from Ernest Thorn, a family friend and retired magician who would appear in “Jews in Magic.” This led Dammann, at 21, to join the Magic Circle of Germany, which inspired his book.

“There’s a saying that we all die three times,” Hatch said, as reported in the “Times.” “The first death is the physical one, when your heart stops beating. The second is when your body is consigned to fire or the grave. And the third is the last time someone utters your name. Life was so cruel and unfair to him, I just thought, it’s a worthy cause to keep Dammann’s name alive for as long as I can.” [HW](#)

(JNS) – “The New York Times” business reporter David Segal tells the story of Richard Hatch, a physicist-turned-magician who works to revive the writing of Guenther Dammann, author of 1933’s “Jews in Magic,” who died during the Holocaust in 1942.

At 23, Dammann self-published an estimated 500 copies of his 100-page book, which historians regard as the first effort to chronicle notable Jewish magicians, both living and dead at the time. Hatch has created a new translation with annotations and photographs, and notes that he is exploring options for publishing.

Hatch writes in the June 24 feature in the “Times” that when he first encountered the title in 1979 and noted its 1933

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# In Netanyahu’s Triumphant Moment, the Heartbreak and Disdain of the Outside World Creeps In



People hold pictures of Israeli hostages during a vigil on the National Mall, July 23, 2024. Credit: Justin Sullivan/Getty Images

By Ron Kampeas

(JTA) – WASHINGTON – The joint meeting of Congress last Wednesday, at times, felt like Benjamin Netanyahu’s happy place: The Israeli prime minister got more than 40 standing ovations for an hourlong speech extolling the necessity of the U.S.-Israel alliance.

But the world outside the U.S. Capitol last Wednesday was unforgiving, and it padded silently into his speech. It infringed on his moment when family members of the hostages held in Gaza were arrested in the chamber’s gallery for protesting him. It showed in the absence of close to 70 lawmakers, out of 535, from the chamber. Inside the chamber, he got a cold shoulder and lacerating criticism from members of Congress who once would have fawned over him.

Netanyahu delivered his fourth speech to a joint meeting of Congress, a history-making record for any world leader. He reveled in the applause; he is under pressure at home, where vast majorities favor a deal that would release hostages in exchange for a ceasefire.

The Biden administration, which wholeheartedly backed Israel following

Hamas’ Oct. 7 attack, has soured on Netanyahu, saying he shifts the goalposts on the proposed ceasefire deal, and that his government has obstructed the entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza.

It was only last Tuesday, after he got to Washington, that Netanyahu was able to secure meetings with President Joe Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Donald Trump, who will face each other in the presidential election in November.

Even Trump, whom Netanyahu lavishly praised in the speech, seemed ready to troll him. The former president posted on social media a friendly exchange with Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian Authority president whom Netanyahu has worked to marginalize.

The speech itself broke little ground: It was long on crowd-pleasing rhetoric but offered few new plans or positions. The Biden administration has long been seeking a “day after” scenario following the war, and Netanyahu spoke only in the vaguest of terms about a grand NATO-like alliance between Israel and Arab countries, with American back-

ing. Families of the hostages, dozens of whom were in Washington for the speech, had said they would consider the visit a failure if he did not announce a deal to free the captives. He did not even mention a deal directly.

Netanyahu’s vow to “destroy Hamas’ military capabilities” got one of 44 standing ovations. But the parents of two young hostages, Hersh Goldberg-Polin and Omer Neutra, sat and stared at Netanyahu, hands still, faces frozen.

At other points in the speech at least two hostage family members who had been invited to attend stood up wearing yellow T-shirts saying “Seal the Deal Now.” They were handcuffed and escorted out of the gallery.

Netanyahu occasionally looked up at the gallery at his wife, Sara, and a hostage Israeli soldiers recently rescued, Noa Argamani, about whom he spoke at length. Behind Argamani was Netanyahu’s special guest, billionaire Elon Musk, who purchased Twitter in 2022 and has long courted accusations of antisemitism.

J Street, the liberal Jewish Middle East lobby, counted 68 Democrats and one Republican who boycotted the speech, more than the 58 Democrats who were absent when Netanyahu last appeared at a joint meeting in 2015. At that time, he was directly rebuking President Barack Obama, whereas last Wednesday every mention of Biden was made in praise.

(He did chide Biden, without naming him, for slow-walking the delivery of weapons to Israel, a claim he’s made before and that the administration has disputed.)

Among the boycotters were party leaders and Jewish lawmakers who would, 10 years ago, never have dared to skip a speech by an Israeli leader.

Among them were former Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who has a longstanding close relationship with the American Israel Public Affairs Committee; Connecticut Rep. Rosa DeLauro, the top

(See **Netanyahu** Page 10 )

## OBITUARIES



Sandra Joy Israel

Sandra Joy Israel, of Germantown, Tenn., passed away Friday, July 19, 2024, at 89 years of age.

Sandy, as she was known to family and friends, was born in Boston, Mass., to Edward and Renee Leibowitz. She received her Bachelor of Arts in psychology and was proud to be a member of the third qualifying graduating class of Brandeis University. She loved music and had a passion for learning and travel, health and wellness and animal welfare.

She held several jobs throughout her life, but her favorite and most rewarding was being a mother, an activity she undertook with full strength and commitment. While her family was her greatest personal treasure, she also shared her wealth of kindness and support with those she called friends.

She was active with UT Faculty Women’s Club, involved in Temple Israel Sisterhood and the local Hadassah chapter. She enjoyed the rewards of community service and sat on the board of Plough Towers, also taking over leadership of the Jewish Family Service’s “Social Singles Group” for five years – creating programming and fostering inclusion for special needs adults. As a patron of the arts, she generously supported and enjoyed local theater and museums.

She is survived by her husband of over 60 years, Dr. Mervyn Israel, her son, Barry Israel, and daughter, Sharon Israel, all of Germantown, Tenn.; and her brother, Stephen Leibowitz, of Boston, Mass.

Graveside services, led by Rabbi Ross Levy, were held at the Temple Israel Cemetery on Sunday, July 21, 2024. HW

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Netanyahu...  
(Continued From Page 9)

Democrat on the powerful Appropriations Committee; and Jewish lawmakers Reps. Jan Schakowsky of Illinois, Sara Jacobs of California, Steve Cohen of Tennessee, Suzanne Bonamici of Oregon and Becca Balint of Vermont, as well as Sens. Bernie Sanders of Vermont and Brian Schatz of Hawaii.

Pelosi later called the speech “by far the worst presentation of any foreign dignitary invited and honored with the privilege of addressing the Congress of the United States.”

There was a coldness even among those present. Sen. Chuck Schumer, the New York Jewish Democrat and Senate majority leader, barely acknowledged Netanyahu when they passed each other. Earlier this year, he said the Israeli prime minister had “lost his way” and called for early Israeli elections. He stood when Johnson introduced Netanyahu but stared ahead and did not applaud.

New York Democratic Rep. Jerry Nadler, the longest-serving Jewish congressman in this Congress, called Netanyahu the worst Jewish leader in more than two millennia this week. Before the speech last Wednesday, he sat in the chamber reading a biography of the prime minister, “The Netanyahu Years,” written by one of Netanyahu’s most excoriating Israeli critics, Ben Caspit.

Rep. Rashida Tlaib, the Palestin-

ian-American Michigan Democrat, sat silently throughout the speech. When she wasn’t examining her phone, she held up a small sign: One side said, “war criminal,” the other side said, “guilty of genocide.” Clerks asked her to stop; she did, for a while, and then resumed.

Jewish Democrats who have been among the strongest and most consistent supporters of Israel were turned off by the speech. Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz of Florida said she was left wanting to know more about Netanyahu’s plans to end the war, return the hostages and prepare for the day after. She suggested that she was unsettled by the speech’s attacks on American university protests, as well as Netanyahu’s lavish praise for Trump.

“Unfortunately, I left his speech still seeking more details on what his plan is to deliver on those goals, and thought it was unnecessary for him to inject comment on U.S. domestic politics,” she said.

Many of the lawmakers who were absent attended a meeting earlier in the day convened by Rep. James Clyburn of South Carolina, one of the most influential Democrats in Congress, where they heard from families of hostages who were unhappy with Netanyahu and his perceived reluctance to take a deal.

Biden invited hostage families to join part of his meeting with Netanyahu last Thursday. The families came away from a meeting last Monday where they felt he barely acknowledged their demands.

“I would say number one, Prime Minister Netanyahu has been talking about complete victory for most of the last 291 days,” Jon Polin, Hersh Goldberg-Polin’s father, said last Tuesday evening at a meeting with reporters. “I still don’t know what the definition is of complete victory. I know the definition of total failure and that is not bringing home hostages.”

The streets between the Watergate hotel, where Netanyahu was staying, and the Capitol were packed with protesters chanting “genocide,” managing at times to breach barriers as Netanyahu’s motorcade sped under the cloud-streaked sky.

Netanyahu’s day started at the stately Washington Hebrew Congregation, at a memorial for Joe Lieberman, the Jewish American statesman who died in March. The memorial had been planned before Republican Speaker Mike Johnson of Louisiana invited Netanyahu to speak but was then shifted to a more secure venue and a more accommodating time of day.

Lieberman was known as a man who straddled ideologies – for years a Democrat and then an independent who campaigned in 2008 for his friend, the Republican presidential nominee Sen. John McCain.

The memorial was a bipartisan reunion of sorts of people who once shared a vision of a robust American foreign policy, and of working when possible across the aisle.

Jack Lew, the current ambassador to Israel, was present, as were Republican Sens. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina and Susan Collins of Maine. Lew sat next to John Bolton, a hawkish foreign policy official who served in the Trump and George W. Bush administrations.

“He was an American patriot and a proud Jew who steadfastly stood with Israel and the Jewish people, especially during trying times,” Netanyahu said. “And it’s precisely during these trying times that I miss him even more.”

Al Gore, the sitting vice president in 2000 who chose Lieberman as his running mate, described Lieberman’s commitment to tikkun olam, the Jewish precept to repair the world.

“Here in America, we continue to grapple with the vitriol and fear that have threatened to drive us apart,” Gore said. “Around the world, democracy is under threat. Humanity itself faces an existential crisis of our own making. People continue to use the sky as an open source. These parallel crises beg the question, can the world be repaired? Can we muster the courage to reject the rancor that threatens to divide us?”

Netanyahu then delivered his brief remarks and exited. His motorcade sped past the protesters. Later, in his speech, as they railed at him outside, he quipped that they had “officially become Iran’s useful idiots.”

Inside the Capitol, the line was met with roaring applause. **HW**

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# Trump, Meeting with Netanyahu, Says We are ‘Close’ to World War III Because of Biden

By Ron Kampeas

(JTA) – After three years of mostly not speaking, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former President Donald Trump had a warm reunion last Friday, with the Republican presidential candidate taking the opportunity to accuse the Biden administration of bringing the world to the brink of war.

“If we win, it will be very simple, it’s all going to work out, and very quickly,” Trump said as Netanyahu and his entourage looked on. “If we don’t, you’re going to end up with major wars in the Middle East and maybe a Third World War. You are closer to a Third World War right now than at any time since the Second World War, you’ve never been so close because we have incompetent people running our country.”

The meeting at Trump’s Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida came one day after Netanyahu met with President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, the presumptive Democratic nominee. The meeting was their first since Trump lashed out at the prime minister for congratulating Biden on his 2020 election victory, which Trump continues to baselessly deny.

Despite past acrimonies, last Friday’s meeting was friendly. Video the Trump campaign posted showed Trump waiting at a door to greet Netanyahu and his wife, Sara.

“We missed you, Mr. President!” Sara Netanyahu said as she hugged Trump and took a kiss from him on both cheeks.

The campaign later posted video of Trump, the Netanyahus and their respective aides seated around a conference table.

There, Trump denied that his relation-

ship with Netanyahu had ever soured. “It was never bad,” he said in response to a reporter’s question. “I would say it was always – no president has done what I’ve done for Israel. And we’ve always had a very good relationship.”

It is customary for visiting foreign leaders to check in with not only the president but his opposition when visiting the United States. But explicit references to the campaign during such meetings are unusual. Earlier this month, Trump had a similar meeting with the Hungarian prime minister, Viktor Orban.

The Trump campaign readout highlighted his actions on Israel as president, which closely aligned with Netanyahu’s right-wing outlook in ways no other president has.

“Prime Minister Netanyahu thanked President Trump and his Administration for working to promote stability in the region through, among many historic achievements, the Abraham Accords, moving the United States Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, recognizing Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, eliminating Qasem Soleimani, ending the horrific Iran Nuclear Deal, as well as combatting anti-Semitism in America and abroad,” the statement said.

The nuclear deal was a signature initiative of the Obama administration and was fiercely opposed by Netanyahu. Soleimani was a top Iranian general – but Trump’s inclusion of his assassination in the list is notable: Days after Hamas’ Oct. 7 attack on Israel, Trump bashed Netanyahu at a rally for not taking a greater role in the operation.

“I will never forget that Bibi Net-

anyahu let us down,” he said at the time. “That was a very terrible thing.”

He struck a different tone at last Friday’s meeting, condemning the Oct. 7 attack and promising to stand with Israel.

“President Trump expressed his solidarity with Israel after the heinous October 7 attack, and pledged that when he returns to the White House, he will make every effort to bring Peace to the Middle East and combat anti-Semitism from spreading throughout college campuses across the United States,” the statement said.

Trump has repeatedly asserted that the war never would have occurred had he been president, though he’s largely been light on details when it comes to how he would handle the conflict now. But earlier in the week, his rhetoric on the war did not seem significantly different from that of Biden, who has been pushing Israel to agree to a ceasefire deal that would see the release of hostages.

“You have to end this, fast. It can’t continue to go on like this,” Trump said, according to Fox News. “It’s too long, it’s too much. You got to get your hostages back.”

Netanyahu’s own account of last Friday’s meeting was more circumspect, saying simply that they had met. The Israeli prime minister posted photos of the meeting and of Netanyahu handing Trump gifts, including Netanyahu’s autobiography.

He also gave Trump a framed photo of Ariel Bibas, a toddler still held in captivity by Hamas. In a post on X, he wished readers “Shabbat shalom” above a photo of him and Trump, in which he

held a blue baseball cap reading “Total Victory,” his stated goal in the war.

Netanyahu last week sought to demonstrate he is in good graces with the breadth of the U.S. government. He gave a speech to Congress cheered by Republicans and a substantial number of Democrats but boycotted by dozens of other Democrats and one Republican. He also faced crowds of protesters, both pro-Palestinian activists and Israelis rallying in support of the families of hostages held in Gaza.

Netanyahu had a friendly meeting with Biden last Thursday, thanking the president for his decades of support for Israel. Biden has said a top priority in his final six months in office is ending the Gaza war.

The meeting with Harris appeared to be fraught. In a press conference afterwards, Harris emphasized the plight of Palestinian civilians and said she told Netanyahu the war must end.

A senior Israeli official expressed disappointment in Harris’ remarks, saying any perception of a gap between Israel and the United States emboldened Hamas and created obstacles to a ceasefire deal.

There were also hints of tension with Trump ahead of last Friday. In the days before the meeting, Trump appeared to troll Netanyahu, posting on social media an affectionate exchange with Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian Authority president Netanyahu has worked to marginalize.

Asked about Trump’s exchange with Abbas, the senior Israeli official shrugged and smiled. **HW**



# Trump Dodges Question on Fast-Tracking Weapons to Israel, Day after Netanyahu Asks Congress to Do So



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu meets with U.S. President Donald Trump at the White House, March 5, 2018. Credit: Haim Zach/GPO.

By Akiva Van Koningsveld

(JNS) – Former President Donald Trump, who is the Republican nominee for his old job, declined to commit to changing U.S. President Joe Biden’s policy of slow-walking weapon shipments to Israel.

Asked on Fox and Friends if he would, as president, speed up weapons shipments to the Jewish state, Trump dodged the question, hours after Netanyahu made that ask during an address to a joint session of the U.S. Congress.

Instead, Trump focused on Israel finishing the war. “I would make sure that it gets over with fast. You have to end this fast,” he told the Fox News morning show. “It can’t continue to go on like this. It’s too long. It’s too much. You gotta get your hostages back.”

Netanyahu told Congress, in his record fourth time for a foreign leader to address the body, that speeding up weapons shipments to Israel could “dramatically expedite an end to the war in Gaza.”

Trump urged Israel to “finish up” the war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip quickly, ahead of his meeting with Netanyahu at Mar-a-Lago in Palm Beach, Fla., scheduled for last Friday.

“He is coming to see me – I want him to finish up and get it done quickly,” the former president told Fox and Friends. “You gotta get it done quickly because they are getting decimated with this publicity.”

Trump repeated a criticism of Israeli media strategy that he has been making for months.

“Israel is not very good at public relations, I’ll tell you that,” Trump told Fox News. “Israel, for whatever reason – you have Jewish people out there wearing yarmulkes and they’re, you know, pro-Palestine.”

“They gotta get this done fast because the world is not taking lightly to it,” Trump said, again claiming that Hamas’s terror attack on Israel on Oct.

7 “would’ve never happened” under his watch as U.S. president.

Trump is expecting “bad news” about the hostages, he told Fox News.

“I think you’re going to find that one of the reasons that Hamas is not really negotiating very nicely, I think they are saying, ‘Wow, they want the hostages back, and we have killed the hostages,’” he said.

“I watched them as they took the hostages in disbelief – again, it would have never happened if I was president – I watched them as they took the hostages,” Trump said. “The level of violence and viciousness, the way they pulled that young girl into a car by her hair and threw her like a sack of potatoes, and I don’t believe that they’re really capable of taking care of all these hostages.”

Trump expressed gratitude to Netanyahu, who praised him extensively for his efforts in the Middle East.

“He was very nice to me yesterday. He mentioned me in the speech very nicely, and I appreciated that,” Trump said.

**‘We look so bad to the world’**  
The Republican candidate slammed anti-Israel protesters outside the Capitol during Netanyahu’s speech last Wednesday afternoon and denounced the rallies as a “disgraceful display.”

“We look so bad to the world,” Trump said. “Rarely have we seen anything like this, and I think you should get a one-year jail sentence if you do anything to desecrate the American flag. Now, people will say: ‘Oh, it’s unconstitutional.’ Those are stupid people.”

“All over the world, Putin and President Xi of China, all over the world they’re watching this,” Trump added. “Kim Jong Un, he looks at us like we’re a bunch of babies. They see that that wouldn’t happen in their countries. It’s impossible for that to happen in their country.”

Earlier this year, Trump made similar remarks on the war against Hamas in an interview with “Israel Hayom.”

“You have to finish up your war. To finish it up. You gotta get it done,” he said at the time. “I am sure you will do that, and we gotta get to peace, we can’t have this going on.”

Matt Brooks, the CEO of the Republican Jewish Coalition, told JNS last week that he interprets Trump’s call to finish the war as a “blank check” for the Israel Defense Forces to destroy the terrorist group completely. **HW**



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# Rocket from Lebanon Kills 12 Children and Teens in Israel, Raising Prospects of Broader War



An image of the soccer field in Majdal Shams following the attack that killed 12 children and teens. Credit: Daniel Hagari/X

By Ben Sales

(JTA) – A rocket fired from Lebanon struck a soccer field in the Golan Heights, killing 12 people ages 20 and under, in the worst attack on civilians in Israel since Oct. 7.

The attack, which Israel has attributed to the Lebanese terror group Hezbollah, heightened the chances of a broader war on Israel’s northern border. Hezbollah has been firing missiles at Israel since the beginning of the Israel-Hamas war nearly 10 months ago, prompting a heavy Israeli response and the evacuation of tens of thousands of Israelis from

border towns.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu moved up his return from the United States, and Israeli officials promised a heavy response to the attack.

“We are nearing a full war against Hezbollah and will respond to this incident accordingly,” Foreign Minister Israel Katz told Israeli media. “There will be costs to the front, and there will be costs to the home front, but we are at a turning point.”

The rocket fired last Saturday hit the Druze town of Majdal Shams, the cen-

ter of the local Druze population, at the northern tip of the Golan Heights, near Israel’s borders with Lebanon and Syria. A warning siren sounded ahead of the incoming rocket, but without enough time for the children on the field to evacuate, according to reports in Israeli media.

“A dark day has fallen on Majdal Shams,” said Dolan Abu Saleh, the head of the Majdal Shams Council, according to the Israeli publication “Ynet.” He asked residents to stay off the roads to clear lanes for emergency personnel, adding, “We are still amid the incident, and another salvo is likely.”

Hezbollah denied responsibility for the attack, though it had earlier said it fired rockets at a nearby target. Israel said the rocket was Iranian-made and was used only by the terror group.

“According to the IDF’s reliable intelligence, the Hezbollah terror organization is behind this barrage,” the Israel Defense Forces spokesman, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, posted on X. “The incident this evening was the most severe strike on innocent civilians.”

Israel’s Druze community lives largely in northern Israel and the Golan Heights, and Druze citizens of Israel serve in the military. Israel captured the Golan Heights from Syria in 1967 and later annexed it, but because that claim

is still disputed, some Druze in the Golan have not obtained Israeli citizenship. Hagari wrote on X, “We embrace the families of those killed and wounded, and the whole Druze community, citizens of the state of Israel.”

Hezbollah began attacking northern Israel shortly after Hamas’ Oct. 7 invasion devastated the country’s south and sparked the war in Gaza. Since then, dozens of Israeli and Lebanese civilians have been killed in the fighting on Israel’s northern border, in addition to 18 Israeli soldiers and hundreds of Hezbollah fighters in Lebanon and Syria.

Thus far, Israel and Hezbollah have stopped short of escalating to an all-out war, which they last fought in 2006. Hezbollah is thought to pose a greater threat to Israel than Hamas, with the ability to strike much of the country. In a June survey, Israelis were split over whether to end the conflict in the north through diplomacy or to enter a broader conflict against Hezbollah.

Now, some Israeli leaders are calling for an escalation.

“The one responsible for the murder of many children and youth in Majdal Shams is Nasrallah,” tweeted right-wing lawmaker Avigdor Liberman, referring to Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah. “And the time has come for him to pay the price.” **HW**

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