



ISRAEL NEWS

*A collection of the week's news from Israel
From the Bet El Twinning / Israel Action Committee of
Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation*

Commentary...

Those Amazing and Heroic Israelis By Melanie Phillips

On Monday, Britain's foreign secretary Ed Miliband delivered a diatribe against Israel, accusing it of ethnic cleansing and war crimes, and vowing to punish it for the crime of allowing Jews to "settle" in their own historic land.

On Wednesday, four ordinary Israelis on a flydubai flight from Dubai to Tel Aviv averted a new 9/11 by overpowering the co-pilot who was attempting to crash the plane, possibly in Israel.

There could hardly be a better illustration of the way Britain is now choosing to embrace a culture of death while Israel is choosing life.

When they heard an alarming commotion in the cockpit, a small handful of Israeli passengers jumped out of their seats and burst in to see the Omani co-pilot stabbing the captain.

One of the Israelis, a plumber by trade, got the assailant in a chokehold. As other Israeli passengers and Emirati crew members helped tie the terrorist up, the plumber seized the control stick and pulled the plane out of its lethal dive.

When Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, asked him afterwards how he'd known what to do, he replied that he'd seen it done on a TV show.

Only the Israelis could behave like this—regular people displaying raw courage, heroism and the lion-hearted, can-do Israeli spirit. Alerted to an existential threat, these ordinary guys immediately took matters into their own hands, neutralized the danger and saved countless lives.

What an amazing, wonderful, heroic country. What a symbol of everything Israel has been doing for the past three years, ever since Hamas launched its genocidal onslaught against it on Oct. 7, 2023.

What a statement of defiance against Britain and a Western world now consumed (whatever they think they're supporting) by a deranged agenda to wipe this country out.

How this lifts the spirits. And how those spirits are instantly lowered by contact with the life-destroying venom of the Western intelligentsia.

Western media outlets tried everything they could to downplay the near-catastrophe in the skies over Saudi Arabia.

CNN called it "an internal personnel incident between pilots." The New York Times called it "a clash in the cockpit." Reuters headlined it: "A pilot brawl, then a rapid descent: Passengers recount chaos in flydubai flight."

As ever, the BBC excelled itself as a disgrace to journalism. BBC News reported: "Israel's far right national security minister Ben-Gvir says that an Israel bound flight that landed in Saudi Arabia was due to a terrorist who wanted to crash the plane and kill Israelis."

By pointlessly singling out the left's principal Israeli bogeyman as its source of information, the BBC primed its audience to believe that the Israelis must be assumed to be lying because they are political extremists.

A new order is being born in which Arabs and Jews are fighting together against the forces of barbarism in the Islamic world. Remarkably, a BBC reporter subsequently referred to Israel's Ben-Gurion International Airport as "Ben-Gvir airport"—a slip of the mind, perhaps, but all-too revealing about the state of that BBC mind.

On Thursday, a BBC News headline ran: "Too early to say what motive for Dubai-Tel Aviv flight attack was, Israeli PM says."

No, he didn't. Netanyahu made it clear that intelligence confirmed it was a terror attack and merely said it was too early to tell whether Iran had been involved.

In other words, the BBC grossly misreported what he had said.

Such wicked distortions by the media reflect a far wider pathology. Left-wingers simply can't process the fact that Israelis may be targeted for destruction by the Palestinian

Arabs or act courageously to defend themselves. Primed to believe in the oppression of the Palestinians at the hands of their cruel and demonic Israeli oppressors, leftists can only see the Palestinian Arabs as victims.

That's why the British government is now to prioritize for refugee resettlement those "Palestinians who have fled the horrors of Gaza," as well as Afghan women and girls.

Giving the Palestinian Arabs priority is astoundingly reckless. Many still support Hamas, and they overwhelmingly support the murder of Jews and the destruction of Israel.

Only recently, a Palestinian Arab to whom Britain had granted asylum and British citizenship, and who was formerly a bodyguard of assassinated Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, was arrested on suspicion of planning a terrorist attack against Jewish communities and Israelis in Europe.

And a Palestinian Arab influencer who was jailed for illegally entering the United Kingdom in a dinghy and had previously called for the slaughter of Jews is now facing deportation after he was found to be living in the Midlands.

The British government is blind to the risks posed by the Palestinian Arabs because, to the morally bankrupt left, the Palestinian cause is synonymous with morality.

The spittle-flecked fanaticism of Miliband's speech to this week's Labour Party conference took many people aback.

Having paid lip service to standing against antisemitism and for Israel's right to defend itself, this scion of a Jewish family decimated by the Holocaust denounced Netanyahu's responsibility for Palestinian "suffering" in Gaza and the West Bank as a "stain on the conscience of the world."

Having falsely accused Israel of "ethnic cleansing" by the "settler terrorists of the West Bank," "war crimes in Gaza" and the "illegal occupation of Palestine," Miliband declared: "To the millions in Britain and elsewhere who have been moved and outraged by the plight of the Palestinian people, we hear you. You were right."

Precisely what does Miliband think those people were "right" about? Their claim that Israel is committing "genocide"? That Palestine must be Arab "from the river to the sea"? Their demand to "globalize the intifada"?

Miliband, who came across as an unhinged demagogue, is a stain on the memory of his slaughtered family.

The suicidal imbecility of Britain's hostility to Israel was demonstrated by the incident at RAF Fairford, the base in southwest England from where U.S. bombers have taken off for Iran.

Last Sunday, five men were arrested on suspicion of being about to attack the base. Although much about this incident remains murky, Britain's Prime Minister Andy Burnham has now said there are "strong indications" that Iran was involved.

But as Netanyahu has revealed, it was Israel that gave the Brits the intelligence warning of such an Iranian attack—and pretty much the next day, he said, the United Kingdom announced sanctions against the Israeli "settlements."

Where Britain leads, the rest of the West follows. There is acute concern that these sanctions are intended to broaden out into a global financial strangulation of Israel, especially if the Democrats win the post-Trump presidency.

There's anxiety that American support for Israel is crumbling. Some reports suggest that, apart from CENTCOM, even the U.S. defense establishment has become hostile to the Jewish state.

This is fundamentally because the West is undergoing a rapidly progressive erosion of its core values, including the destruction of morality, truth and reason itself.

שבת שלום וחג שמח

Even today, diminished as it is, the United Kingdom sets the Western cultural pace. That's why the British government's defamation and delegitimization of Israel are so important.

Britain is leading the West into the heart of darkness—the abandonment of civilization for the embrace of barbarism. And the people upon whose backs Miliband et al have accordingly stuck a bullseye are the Jews.

But another narrative is emerging to counter this obscenity. Flydubai is a United Arab Emirates airline. The terrorist co-pilot was Omani. Oman is an ally of Iran. The UAE has become a close ally of Israel fighting Iran. The Emirati crew helped Israelis on the plane to avert catastrophe. And the plane was allowed to land in Saudi Arabia.

A new order is being born in which Arabs and Jews are fighting together against the forces of barbarism in the Islamic world.

On their way home to Israel, survivors of the hijacking sang the words written by the 18th-century Chassidic rabbi Nachman of Breslov: "The whole entire world is a very narrow bridge, and the main thing is to have no fear at all."

Britain and much of Europe—and even America if it allows the Democratic Party to gain power—are now hurtling downward towards a catastrophic crash. But Israel will live because it has seized the cockpit controls. (JNS Oct 1)

A Spiritual Awakening By Avi Abelow

Something extraordinary is happening in Israel. And, as I have said throughout this war, I believe we are experiencing a historic spiritual awakening of the Jewish people, in Israel.

Remember what I shared about the final night of Selichot before Yom Kippur? Over 100,000 Jews reportedly flooded Jerusalem's Old City, filling the Western Wall plaza and spilling into the surrounding streets of the Old City, leading to the closing of the Old City gates to newcomers. An extraordinary sea of Jews gathering at the foot of the Temple Mount, the holiest place in Judaism.

And now, during Sukkot, we're seeing it again.

On the first day of Chol Hamoed, enormous crowds of Jews reportedly poured into Jerusalem's Old City en route to the Western wall of the Temple Mount, with police, again, closing off entry at the Old City gates because of the crowds.

Think about what we are witnessing.

After nearly three years of war, unimaginable tragedy, sacrifice and pain, the Jewish people aren't running away from their identity.

They are running toward it.

Toward Jerusalem. Toward the Temple Mount. Toward Hashem.

This war has done something profound to our people. More and more Jews are recognizing that what we are experiencing isn't merely a military or political struggle. It is also a spiritual battle over who we are, why we are here and what our destiny is.

We have suffered terrible losses. But we have also witnessed extraordinary miracles. Against overwhelming odds, our soldiers continue fighting, our nation continues rebuilding, and Jewish faith is finding renewed expression across Israeli society.

And perhaps that is one of the greatest miracles of all.

Our enemies sought to break us. Instead, we are witnessing countless Jews reconnecting with the very source of our strength.

The Jewish people are awakening to the realization that our ultimate security does not come from our weapons, our military or our political leaders. It comes from Hashem. And our responsibility is to do everything in our power while trusting Him.

We are not simply fighting to survive. We are rediscovering what we are living for.

Ignore the divisive, political headlines. Something historic is unfolding before our eyes. Don't get so consumed by the daily headlines that you miss the bigger picture. Stick with me at the Pulse of Israel for the full picture.

We are privileged to be living through an extraordinary chapter in Jewish history.

Don't just watch this awakening.

Be part of it.

Moadim L'simcha from our beautiful God-given, indigenous, ancestral homeland.

Am Yisrael Chai!!! (Facebook Sep 29)

This Is What We Get for Recognizing Palestine

By Rupa Subramanya

At the United Nations last week, prime minister Mark Carney announced \$100 million in aid for Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, including \$20 million for peace and security efforts. Canada has contributed more than \$600 million since October 2023, while sanctioning two Israeli cabinet ministers last year for allegedly offering "political cover" to perpetrators of settler violence.

In case you still have any doubts about where Canada stands, let me tell you about Regavim, an NGO in Israel. Regavim was one of seven targets of Canadian sanctions in June, accused of "directly or indirectly facilitating, supporting, providing funding for, or contributing to the use of violence by Israeli extremist settlers against Palestinian civilians or their property," according to the government.

Meir Deutsch is the director general of Regavim. He described Regavim as essentially a legal and policy organization. "We are more of a think tank," he told me. "We work mostly with members of Parliament, we work with the media, we work by researching and filing court cases."

"We don't [have] tractors, we don't build, we don't destroy, we don't do anything physical on the ground," Deutsch added. "We have nothing to do with any kind of violence. Not only that, in cases of violence, we came out loudly saying we are against it, and the people involved in violence should be put into jail."

Canada wasn't going out on a limb when it sanctioned Regavim. The European Union did the same thing in May, also sanctioning Deutsch personally under its Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime. "Regavim and its leadership lobby for the demolition of Palestinian property. . . and institute legal proceedings to that end," the EU said, citing Regavim's efforts to have an EU-funded Palestinian school near Bethlehem demolished.

Regavim doesn't hide what its mission is: "Restoring the Zionist vision to its primary role in the Israeli policy process." Since the school was located in an area of the West Bank where building permits and planning are administered by Israel, Regavim petitioned the Israeli courts, arguing that the school had been built illegally and was unsafe. A court agreed, and the school was demolished in May.

Perhaps this is where Canada was heading when Carney's government announced the recognition of Palestine last September. But no one from the Canadian government was in touch with Regavim before or since the sanctions were imposed, according to Deutsch. "No one sent us an email saying, 'This is what we think you guys are doing, and it's not okay,'" he said.

Canada's move means that Regavim lost access to donations. In the EU, Deutsch can make financial transactions only in shekels, since his access to foreign currencies is restricted. His wife couldn't use her credit card at the grocery store, he told me.

What Canada did represents a remarkably expansive use of sanctions, in which punishment is aimed at an NGO for petitioning its own country's court system.

Craig Martin, a law professor at Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas, who has testified before the Canadian Senate about sanctions, told me that Ottawa generally does not give people or organizations an opportunity to respond before sanctioning them. Nor is there an established evidentiary threshold. The government is under no obligation to publicly disclose the evidence behind a designation, Martin said, and courts have largely deferred to the foreign affairs minister's broad discretion.

Exactly what did Regavim do to deserve Canada's sanctions? Was the group's use of Israeli courts to accomplish its mission part of the government's rationale? I don't have answers to those questions from Global Affairs Canada.

Whatever you might think of Israel's policies in the West Bank, or of Regavim's campaign against unauthorized Palestinian construction, what Canada did represents a remarkably expansive use of sanctions, in which punishment is aimed at an NGO for petitioning its own country's court system. The sanctions also raise an obvious question: Would the same standard apply if the politics were reversed?

On the eve of Yom Kippur, Netanel Shakron took his 16-year-old son to a natural spring near Neve Tzuf in the West Bank. Israeli authorities said that a Palestinian man affiliated with Hamas opened

fire, killing Shakron in front of his son.

The shooter was wounded and captured, but Israel's foreign ministry said that he will receive a stipend equal to six times the salary of a public school teacher under the Palestinian Authority's (PA) prisoner-payment system. This is the same system—supposedly abolished last year—in which Palestinians imprisoned by Israel receive money in line with the length of their sentences. Palestinians defended the program as a form of social welfare, while critics call it “pay for slay.”

Last year, Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas replaced the old system with needs-based social assistance, but then said that “even if we have one penny left, it is for the prisoners and martyrs,” adding that they “must receive everything, as it was in the past.”

Last month, Mundhir al-Hayek, the spokesman in Gaza for the Palestinian faction Fatah, said this when asked about American demands to halt the payments: “We did not stop the payment of salaries.” He even described what he called a “revolving door” for routing money to recipients, including using powers of attorney to help someone in Gaza authorize someone in the West Bank to collect money from Palestinian institutions, then send it onward.

That brings me to a talk I attended at the Macdonald-Laurier Institute in Ottawa, where Canadian human-rights lawyer Sarah Teich detailed her examination of the prisoner-payment system. Under the old system, as Teich put it, “the more severe the crime, the greater the financial reward.”

Canada prohibits terrorism financing and facilitation, has sanctioned Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad officials, and has targeted Hamas's financial networks. Yet Teich said that “no foreign official has ever been sanctioned” by Canada for involvement in the prisoner-payment system. I could find no instance of the EU sanctioning a Palestinian Authority official for administering or supporting the system, either.

If Ottawa is prepared to impose sanctions for allegedly providing “political cover” to perpetrators of settler violence, as it did with the two Israeli cabinet ministers last year, then why won't it do the same against those who help keep the prisoner-payment system running?

One possible explanation is a “lack of legislative clarity,” as Teich put it, meaning Canada has provisions to criminalize terror financing but not specifically pay for slay. “With limited legislative clarity, it gives policymakers license to apply the law in not the most evenhanded way. It is open for interpretation,” Teich said.

There is one more wrinkle. Carney's formal announcement recognizing Palestine makes prosecuting its officials “more complicated,” according to Teich, because recognized foreign states can enjoy immunity in Canadian courts, depending on their position and whether their alleged conduct was undertaken in an official capacity.

I asked Teich if any of that \$600 million Canada committed to Palestine could be used to support the prisoner-payment system, even if indirectly. She was careful not to claim that it is happening, but she questioned the safeguards on money flowing to the Palestinian Authority. “If we're giving money to the PA, we know the PA engages in this practice, it is enshrined in their law, and they don't have checks and balances. We need to ensure that Canada does not somehow become complicit in this program,” she told me.

The federal government's summer progress report on Canada's “National Commitments to Combat Antisemitism” didn't get much attention. Buried in the report is a sentence that marked a striking statement from the Carney government.

“Antisemitism, which includes anti-Zionism, is not always obvious,” Public Safety Canada wrote. The federal government wasn't merely saying that anti-Zionism can sometimes become antisemitic, or that criticism of Israel can cross a line into hatred of Jews. It was saying that antisemitism “includes anti-Zionism.”

The report went even further. It said that institutions should learn to recognize “contemporary manifestations of antisemitism, including anti-Zionism,” using the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism as a guide. The report also discussed a recent Ontario hate-crime prosecution, highlighting what was described as Canada's first judicial finding that “Zionists” had been used as a “pejorative proxy for Jews.” According

to the report, the finding is particularly important because protesters are using the word more often to shield otherwise hateful speech from criminal liability.

Are Canada's efforts to counter antisemitism working? The report offered a fairly simple gauge. “Safety is not theoretical,” the report said. It can be measured by whether Jewish families “feel comfortable attending synagogue” and whether Jewish institutions can operate “openly and securely.”

Then came Yom Kippur in Toronto. Neil Herland, a longtime CBC journalist, went to a service held by the Song Shul at the Meridian Arts Center. Outside were pro-Palestinian protesters. In a video posted by Herland later, one protester repeatedly screamed at him through a megaphone: “You're going to hell!” Another shouted: “Zionist alert!” Herland said the protesters were trying to “taunt and intimidate” him as he entered the building.

Herland saw the encounter as part of something much larger. His late father was an Austrian Jew who survived the Holocaust in Romania before coming to Canada as a refugee. On X, Herland wrote that he had obtained an Austrian passport this year “in case Canada becomes unsafe for me as a Jew.” He said that he fears such a moment “is approaching, here in Canada and elsewhere.”

“Jewish Canadians are living in a parallel world,” Herland wrote. “Where police stand guard with guns outside synagogues. And Jewish schools, religious sites, and businesses are targeted with bullets. And most Canadians have no awareness or understanding.”

What happened next was almost too on the nose. According to news reports, CBC pulled Herland off the air and summoned him to a disciplinary meeting after he posted about what happened. CBC declined to confirm those details, saying only that reporting about the matter contains “errors and mischaracterizations.”

That tells you more than any government report could about where Canada actually is in the fight against antisemitism. (Free Press Sep 29)

Flying from Israel to Amsterdam Can Now Come with Jail Time

Travelers landing at Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport from Tel Aviv are reporting a new routine at the border: Dutch customs officers pulling aside passengers arriving from Israel and screening their luggage for goods produced in Judea, Samaria, eastern Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights. Passengers on El Al arrivals described being waved out of the “nothing to declare” line and sending every bag through X-ray machines, with officers asking about wine, dates, olives, and souvenirs.

The searches enforce a Dutch trade measure that took effect September 22 banning the import, purchase, and sale of any goods made wholly or partially in Israeli settlements. The ban covers souvenirs, gifts, and items in personal luggage, with no exception for products bought before that date. A product made mostly in Tel Aviv is still banned if even one ingredient originates in a settlement, and the same rules apply to online orders shipped to the Netherlands. Removed or altered origin labels bring additional penalties.

The penalties are not theoretical. Intentionally violating or circumventing the ban carries up to six years in prison or a significant fine, and even unintentional violations can bring up to a year. Travelers found with covered goods are given the chance to surrender them to customs; anything seized comes with an official report, and prosecutors decide whether to press charges.

Israel is pushing back. The Foreign Ministry warned Israelis planning travel to the Netherlands to expect “long and invasive baggage checks,” and Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar ordered Dutch diplomats based in Ramallah to return their Israeli-issued diplomatic documentation within seven days.

For kosher travelers, Amsterdam has long been one of the main gateways between North America and Israel. KLM routes many US-Tel Aviv connections through Schiphol and El Al flies the route nonstop, so this reaches far beyond vacations in Holland. Popular kosher wineries, including the Golan Heights Winery in Katzrin and Psagot in the Binyamin region, sit in the covered areas, along with many Jordan Valley date growers.

Amsterdam is also a destination in its own right for Jewish

travelers. In the old Jewish neighborhood, the Jewish Cultural Quarter spans four centuries of history: the 17th-century Portuguese Synagogue still holds services, and the Jewish Museum tells the story of Jewish life in the Netherlands. The National Holocaust Museum and Hollandsche Schouwburg trace the persecution and deportation of Dutch Jews, while the Anne Frank House preserves the building where Anne and her family hid during World War II.

Anyone flying to or through the Netherlands from Israel should check labels before packing, keep packaging or receipts showing where products were made, and confirm purchases against the EU's postcode list of covered towns. Travelers unsure about an item should use the red "Goods to Declare" channel on arrival and hand it over voluntarily.

Better yet, avoid flying through The Netherlands entirely.
(YeahThatsKosher.com Sep 29)

Israel Is Winning By Douglas Murray

The attempted hijacking of a Flydubai plane en route from Dubai to Tel Aviv brings back memories of many other attacks. The bravery of the crew and passengers who overwhelmed the pilot-terrorist brings to mind the heroism of the American passengers on United Flight 93. The targeting of a plane full of Israeli passengers recalls the spate of plane hijackings that haunted the 1970s. But most of all, the attack—and the successful averting of what could have been a mass-casualty terrorist event—is a reminder of something bigger: that Israel and the West remain at war with Islamic radicals, and that it is a war we are winning.

To some people, this reflection might seem counterintuitive. Each day's news is filled with declarations of defeat. The online world is filled with shrill declarations that Israel has lost this war.

But as we approach the third anniversary of the October 7 attacks, I stand by what I wrote here this time last year: that Israel and her allies have been winning the war on the ground even as they have lost the PR war around the world. The PR war matters. But it matters less than the war itself. Better to win the ground war and lose the PR war than the other way around.

Three years after the attack that Yahya Sinwar started, it is worth reiterating the successes of the nation he tried to defeat—and the utter decimation of the people who started this war.

For decades, the Iranian revolutionary government had tried to encircle the state of Israel in a ring of fire. Its proxies— Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and other forces in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen—were poised like a trap. The long- and short-range rockets that had been stockpiled in Lebanon in particular were intended for one main purpose: to act as a deterrent if Israel ever carried out military action against the Iranian nuclear program.

That nuclear program was to be the jewel in the Iranian regime's crown. It was what the regime's apologists in the West spent years pretending was not in operation. But it was. And the regime's mouthpieces in the West were simply covering for it until the day the Iranians could declare a nuclear breakout.

Once the mullahs had deliverable nuclear weapons, they believed they would be invincible—effectively able to continue repressing the Iranian people for the indefinite future and hold not just the Middle East but also the wider world by the throat. That was, effectively, what their mouthpieces in the Western media wanted. Only one great miscalculation prevented them from getting there: Sinwar's launch of the October 7 attacks.

With the hindsight of three years of war, we can now see more clearly how complete the devastation of Iran's plans has been. Piece by piece, the government of Benjamin Netanyahu took apart the Iranian axis.

First, they took apart Hamas in Gaza. They did this despite constant attempts to make them stop, which came not just from the negligibly important "allies" in Europe but from President Joe Biden's White House. Throughout the years during which the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) attempted to finish its mission in Gaza, the Biden administration consistently tried to pull it back. But the Israeli government refused. Even as Kamala Harris declared that she had "studied the maps" and the hashtag "All eyes on Rafah" went global

online, the IDF went into Hamas's last stronghold. There they cornered Sinwar and killed the mastermind of the attacks. There was no "massacre" in Rafah, as the online world had predicted. There was simply another Israeli victory.

Other leaders of the Iranian axis were killed one by one. Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh was killed by a bomb hidden in the compound where he was staying in Tehran in July 2024. With Hamas taken apart, the Israelis turned their attention to Hezbollah and Lebanon. There was significant disagreement within the Israeli war cabinet about when to take on Hezbollah, which joined the war against Israel on October 8, 2023. Defense Minister Yoav Gallant wanted to strike straight away, on the basis that Hezbollah was the larger enemy and Hamas the smaller one, and that it was wiser to follow the rules of war that recommend taking on your strongest enemy first. But Netanyahu was reluctant—though not unwilling—to fight on two fronts.

The prime minister's plan paid off. A year after the October 7 attacks, Israel had carried out its brilliant pager and walkie-talkie attacks, killing or maiming thousands of Hezbollah operatives with minimal civilian casualties. Then, while Netanyahu was in New York speaking at the United Nations, Israel bombed the compound where the head of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, and almost all his remaining senior colleagues were gathered.

Having pulled apart Hamas and Hezbollah in turn, it was time to take the war directly to the Iranian regime. For this, Israel needed—and received—the help of the new administration in Washington. The Israeli air force took out the majority of the Iranian regime's surface-to-air missile defenses. They left the skies above Iran defenseless and then came back. Two years into the war Sinwar started, Israel had struck thousands of regime targets and opened the route for American B-2 bombers to attack the main Iranian nuclear sites.

President Donald Trump declared a total victory over the Iranian nuclear program, but once it became clear that the Iranians retained capabilities and were still refusing to cooperate, both the Americans and the Israelis returned. This time—at the start of this year—they not only targeted the Iranian nuclear program again but also killed the supreme leader. At present, the Iranian regime is weak, its leaders are reluctant to appear in public, its economy is in the dust thanks to the sanctions of Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, and the entire terror axis that Iran has built since 1979 is on its knees.

Perhaps the coup de grâce will come from outside Iran, or perhaps it will come from inside. But the regime has never been in a weaker position.

Sinwar was a psychopath, and so he probably would have launched his war anyway. But by any analysis, what he started on October 7 was one of the greatest military missteps in history. Everybody alongside and above him in the chain of command is now dead. Neither Hamas, Hezbollah, nor the Iranian regime has a noose ready to pull around Israel's neck anymore. Three years ago, this set of victories would have seemed unthinkable. Today, it is an average day's news. That a large share of the Israeli hostages who Hamas claimed on October 7 were eventually returned alive is an additional victory worthy of scripture.

Only one part of the war has been lost, and that is the war for public opinion—especially among the young. That is both concerning and unsurprising. The terrorist-linked regime in Qatar, among others, has been superb at using its mouthpieces at Al Jazeera and other, more covert propaganda channels to influence global opinion. These outlets started making false claims that Israel was committing "genocide" in Gaza beginning in October 2023. Sadly, large parts of the world have believed this lie, and weak governments like that of the UK have decided to pander to a part of their domestic political base by repeating and feeding it.

In the years ahead, that will be their problem. But for the time being, what happened in the skies above Saudi Arabia on Wednesday morning stands as a metaphor for three years of war. The Israelis saw an existential threat, took matters into their own hands, and decided their own course. The rest of the West will have to decide whether it will follow the Israeli model or let its own future be dictated by terror and the hijacking of its entire society. (The Free Press Sep 30)
