



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*

about food and longed for the "fleshpots of Egypt," blaming Moses for their plight. The Israeli left sees the past through similarly rose-tinted glasses.

Not only does it fault Netanyahu for "destroying" a

Commentary...

Passover: Long Division and a Short Memory By Ruthie Blum

It's become fashionable—almost ritualistic—to lament the "unprecedented" disunity among Israelis today. Members of the public wring their hands over the loss of social cohesion that they insist used to characterize the country.

But let's face it: Such nostalgia borders on amnesia. Indeed, anyone reviewing both past and recent history has to admit that there's nothing new about Jewish polarization.

On the contrary, a lack of consensus is one of our oldest traditions. So, maybe it's time that we replace whining with acceptance and embrace discord as an integral part of our heritage—a God-given challenge we are compelled to meet, like it or not.

Passover provides the perfect opportunity to examine this paradox of a seemingly disparate people bound together, in spite of ourselves, by a life force beyond our control. As Jews around the world gather this weekend around Seder tables to celebrate our freedom from bondage in Egypt, we would do well to draw parallels between then and now.

The Haggadah recounts the miracles of the Exodus—the Ten Plagues, the splitting of the Red Sea, the defeat of Pharaoh's tyranny. But it also tells a tale of doubt, ingratitude and strife among the Israelites.

In Exodus 6:9, for example, Moses delivers God's promise of redemption to the Israelites, but they "did not listen to him because of their broken spirit and harsh slavery."

Who could blame them?

They were beaten down, exhausted and skeptical, much like many Israelis are at the moment, after 18 months of an ongoing, multi-front war whose conclusion often feels elusive.

The understandable mood made it hard for the Israelites to envision a future of salvation. Ditto for those who currently mistrust Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's policies and motives.

These are people whose visceral hatred for him is so strong that it blinds them to the possibility that he might be leading the country toward the security it requires and reasserting the sovereignty under question by ill-wishers. They are the ones who encourage and amplify national despair through a hostile media echo chamber.

Then there's the episode in Exodus 5:20-21, when the Israelite taskmasters, after Pharaoh increases their labor, confront Moses and Aaron: "You have made us abhorrent in Pharaoh's eyes ... you have put a sword in their hand to kill us!"

This is the ancient version of refrains we hear ad nauseam from the Israeli opposition. Whatever Netanyahu's stand on Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Iran—or, domestically, on judicial activism—his detractors accuse him of endangering Israel, rather than safeguarding its survival and democracy. Ironically, they even invoke the Exodus to compare him to Pharaoh.

The most dramatic instance of disaffection in the Exodus story occurs at the edge of the Red Sea, in passage 14:11-12. With Pharaoh's army bearing down, the panicked Israelites hurl at Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to die in the wilderness?"

Stunningly, they went so far as to suggest that slavery under Pharaoh was preferable to trusting Moses. It's a "cut off your nose to spite your face" attitude that Israel's elites have been promoting with a vengeance.

In the immediate aftermath of the Exodus, the Israelites grumbled

"healthy" system of governance; it has stooped to asserting that he is prolonging the war for personal gain and is indifferent to the fate of the hostages. It's a blood libel in protesters' clothing.

Moses had to deal with this kind of rebellion. And though Netanyahu's no prophet, he has borne the brunt of internal schisms more than any contemporary leader, with supporters treating him as a savior and rivals as a dictator.

The Israelites who left Egypt weren't immediately ready to become a nation. It took decades of wandering in the literal and figurative desert.

This is worth keeping in mind with regard to the modern State of Israel. While a thriving symbol of technological innovation, military might and societal resilience, it's the homeland of the Jews.

In other words, the very DNA responsible for the country's miracles is what prevents it from escaping the burdensome rifts that have characterized our people from time immemorial. We can opt to see this as good news or bad. This year at the Seder, let's aim for the former. (JNS Apr 10)

Did Netanyahu Leave the White House Empty-Handed?

By Amit Segal

It's Tuesday, April 8, and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu appeared to receive nothing from President Donald Trump in their Oval Office press conference yesterday—at least at face value. But didn't Trump and Netanyahu get along great? Yes, but that's not what truly matters. I'll explain.

Netanyahu believes in reciprocity—but despite Israel's gestures toward the U.S., such as scrapping the remaining tariffs on American imports, it appears to have received nothing in return.

What did Netanyahu want? Two key things: an announcement from Trump that he's reducing the 17 percent tariff on Israel, and a green light to attack Iran's nuclear facilities. And he got neither.

On the issue of tariffs, Netanyahu projected confidence. Israel will eliminate the trade deficit with the U.S., come to an agreement on tariffs, and serve as an example for many countries to follow, he declared. But Trump wouldn't commit, saying, "don't forget, we help Israel a lot," while adding, "we give Israel \$4 billion a year—that's a lot."

And Iran? "Everyone agrees a deal would be preferable to doing the obvious," Trump claimed, while adding that neither he nor Israel wants to be involved in "the obvious." He then went one step further, announcing that Washington and Tehran are holding direct talks on Saturday.

So no tariffs agreement, and no green light to strike Iran.

So, Washington and Jerusalem are on different pages? Not necessarily. Senior Israeli officials, including Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar, have recently expressed openness to American negotiations with Iran. Why? It may well be a coordinated move: let's give direct talks a chance, and if that doesn't work, a military strike will have to do.

Indeed, in Abu Dhabi there's consensus among regional and American officials that a military strike on Iran's nuclear facilities is a plausible option.

After all, it was Trump who said yesterday that Iran is entering "very dangerous territory."

(It's Noon in Israel, with Amit Segal Apr 8)

שבת שלום
וחג כשר ושמח

What's in a Name? By Heather Johnston

The name “West Bank” conjures up visions of a complex and contentious region of the Middle East. As Mike Huckabee’s nomination to be ambassador to Israel nears confirmation and his unapologetically Christian point of view comes to the fore, there’s increasing discussion of the label itself. The time has come to return to the true, historical, biblical names of Judea and Samaria—names that reflect the deep, millennia-old connection between the Jewish people and their ancestral homeland.

Last month, House Foreign Affairs Committee chairman Brian Mast instructed committee staff to refer to the area as Judea and Samaria in official documents and communications. He said Congress should “recognize Israel’s rightful claim to the cradle of Jewish civilization.” And he’s right.

The region has been called Judea and Samaria since Joshua led the Israelites. Judea was the ancient kingdom of the Jews, a central part of Jewish history and identity. King David was born there. As was Jesus. Samaria was also an integral region of ancient Israel. These names are not merely geographic terms; they carry cultural, historical and religious weight. On the other hand, the term “West Bank” was invented in the 20th century. It’s an artificial construct, coined to describe the western bank of the Jordan River after Jordan attacked Israel in the 1948 War of Independence and annexed the area in 1950. It was part of an intentional effort to redefine the region in terms that were disconnected from Jewish identity, furthering the narrative that the land was devoid of historical Jewish presence.

But Judea and Judaism are inextricably linked.

The “West Bank” designation has been adopted by international bodies and political actors who seek to delegitimize Jewish sovereignty in the region, fueling the perception that the land belongs to others, rather than to the Jewish people who have maintained an uninterrupted presence there for thousands of years.

While many people use the term innocently, out of habit, or because that’s how they’ve heard it referred to, others use it purposefully. Because language frames our thinking, a name that disconnects the Jews from the land could have a real negative impact on policy. Correct messaging is, therefore, imperative.

Recently, Rep. Claudia Tenney (R-N.Y.) launched the Friends of Judea and Samaria Caucus to raise awareness of the region’s historic, strategic and cultural significance to both Israel and the United States. In a letter to President Donald Trump, members of the caucus wrote: “Judea and Samaria comprise the Judeo-Christian biblical heartland, where over 80% of the Torah and Old Testament took place. This region is the heart of our shared Judeo-Christian heritage.”

In their respective Houses of Congress, Rep. Tenney and Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) introduced the “Recognizing Judea and Samaria Act,” which states that the U.S. government “should no longer use the term ‘West Bank’ in official government materials” and instead that area should be referred to by “its historical names of ‘Judea and Samaria.’”

This is much more than political posturing. And it is also not a proclamation aimed at ruling in or out any particular policy. Reclaiming the names Judea and Samaria is a necessary step toward restoring authenticity to the narrative surrounding the region. The Jewish people’s connection to these lands is not contingent upon the whims of modern geopolitics—it is a deep-rooted, ancient tie that has been maintained through centuries of trials and tribulations.

Some argue that using the names Judea and Samaria will make peace more difficult to achieve. They are wrong. True peace cannot be built on a false history. Acknowledging the rightful names of Judea and Samaria is a step toward fostering a more honest and genuine dialogue about the region’s future. The Jewish people’s connection to Judea and Samaria is not negotiable, and any peace process that ignores this fundamental truth is bound to fail.

The name “West Bank” has long been a tool of political manipulation designed to sever the bond between the Jewish people and the land. It is time to turn the page and restore the names of Judea and Samaria, the heart of the Jewish homeland. Let us honor the past and ensure a future where peace can be built on a foundation of truth. (JNS Apr 8)

What's Going on in Southern Lebanon? By Jacques Neriah

The deployment of the Lebanese army in Southern Lebanon amid conflicting reports regarding the ongoing hesitation of the Lebanese government to enforce the disarmament of Hezbollah goes to the heart of Lebanese politics.

Reports praise the Lebanese army for taking over 196 out of 260 Hezbollah strongholds south of the Litani River, seizing an undisclosed number of weapons depots in Southern Lebanon belonging to the Shi’ite militia, and its ongoing removal of Hezbollah’s fortified positions in the south. However, other reports still point to the fact that the Lebanese Armed Forces has deployed barely 6,000 soldiers in the south; at least another 4,000 are necessary to complete the deployment.

Moreover, reports have shown blatant cooperation between Hezbollah elements and Shi’ite intelligence officers belonging to the LAF’s Southern Command. It is also worth mentioning that at least 50% to 60% of the deployed soldiers belong to the Shi’ite community and maintain family/tribal bonds with Shi’ite residents in the south who identify with Hezbollah.

However, the most critical issue remains that the Lebanese government has not presented to U.S. envoy Morgan Ortagus, as requested, a precise schedule for either the LAF deployment to the south or Hezbollah’s dissolution. Even the issue of the disarmament of the Palestinian factions in Lebanon, including Hamas, which was to have been taken care of before the dismantling of Hezbollah, has not been addressed by the Lebanese government, to the disappointment of the American administration.

As usual, the Lebanese government stressed the intricacies of Lebanese sectarian politics that it said prevent it from adopting a stricter attitude towards Hezbollah, and emphasized the risk of sliding into renewed civil war, a possibility that would be disastrous for all. The Lebanese also stressed to their American visitors that the precarious situation on the northeastern border with Syria has compelled the army to direct to that front troops meant for deployment in the south.

Instead, the Lebanese preferred to show 18 new reforms addressing the financial sector, and to claim that a complete Israeli withdrawal from Southern Lebanon would bolster its position vis-a-vis Hezbollah and make it easier to adopt an aggressive policy against the terrorist group.

In the meantime, Hezbollah has expressed its readiness (according to Reuters, quoting an undisclosed senior Hezbollah official) to discuss disarmament, conditioned on Israel’s prior withdrawal from five strategic positions it maintains along the Israel-Lebanon border. In the meantime, the terrorist organization continues to flex its muscles, reorganize in Southern Lebanon and prepare itself for a resumption of hostilities with Israel.

(Jerusalem Center for Security and Foreign Affairs Apr 10)

The IDF's Dual Strategy in Gaza By Gershon Hacohen

The Israel Defense Forces’ expansion of its operations in the Gaza Strip with the deployment of an additional division continues to reflect the strategic logic behind the launch of “Operation Strength and Sword” more than two weeks ago. The advance of the 36th Division along the Morag axis, in the area between Khan Younis and Rafah, adds another layer of pressure on Hamas’s key strongholds in the central part of the Strip.

However, this maneuver does not yet signal a decisive push into the heart of Gaza City or the central refugee camps. As indicated by both the prime minister and the defense minister, the objective of the operation remains the application of sustained military pressure on Hamas, with the expectation that this will lead to another ceasefire and the release of hostages.

This approach by the IDF represents a middle path between two conflicting strategies being debated in Israel. One path advocates focusing solely on securing the release of hostages, even at the cost of accepting all of the terrorist organization’s demands, including

ending the war and a full Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. The other calls for a comprehensive military campaign to capture the entire Gaza Strip and eliminate Hamas, even if this requires forgoing further efforts to rescue hostages at this stage.

In contrast, the IDF's approach aims to pursue both goals—simultaneously promoting the release of hostages while also degrading Hamas's military capabilities and governing authority. In practical terms, the logic behind the IDF's actions provides the political leadership with flexibility at a critical juncture. If military pressure yields progress toward a new hostage deal, operations can be paused under a ceasefire. But if no such progress is achieved, the military campaign can escalate and expand.

From the IDF's perspective, two main considerations underlie this middle-ground approach. The first, openly stated, is the belief that sustained and intensifying military pressure will lead to the release of additional hostages. The second is that an extended ceasefire would benefit Hamas, giving it time to recover, rebuild and reorganize its military forces in preparation for renewed fighting. The IDF aims to prevent such a scenario by maintaining the momentum of military pressure.

Over the two weeks since the start of the operation, a significant portion of the damage inflicted on Hamas has been achieved through the use of air power. In parallel, ground operations have enabled the IDF to reshape the battlefield in preparation for any future military action. In this context, the IDF has focused on establishing key transportation corridors, such as the Netzarim corridor, the expanded Philadelphi corridor and now the Morag axis, designed to provide the IDF with freedom of movement and maneuverability in response to any future developments or arrangements.

For now, the overall direction of IDF operations continues to follow a measured, incremental logic that remains open to a range of flexible possibilities going forward. (Israel Hayom Apr 6)

What Creates a Palestinian Terrorist and his Foreign Supporters?

By Jonathan S. Tobin

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Donald Trump have a lot to discuss. The prime minister's trip to Washington is the second since Trump returned to the White House just a few months ago, and he's hoping that the talks will ensure that the two countries remain on the same page when it comes to how to deal with the war on Hamas in Gaza.

Other issues are on the agenda, like exempting Israel from the tariffs Trump is imposing on trade partners. He's also hoping to ensure that Trump's negotiations with Iran over its nuclear program are aimed at eliminating that threat entirely rather than appeasing it, as Presidents Barack Obama and Joe Biden did. But Netanyahu is also looking for reassurance of continued support for the resumption of Israel's military campaign. His twin goals of eradicating the terrorists and gaining the release of the remaining living hostages among those who were kidnapped by Hamas on Oct. 7, 2023, may or may not ultimately be mutually exclusive.

As long as the Jewish state's American ally is not seduced into believing that a deal ensures the survival of Hamas is the way to go, then the prime minister should be satisfied. He could not then just claim an immediate diplomatic success. Netanyahu could also hold onto hope that the war can be won, rather than end in a disastrous reaffirmation of the Palestinian Arab belief that they can never be forced to accept the consequences of their barbaric quest for Israel's destruction.

Yet that is exactly the one key element of the story that is conspicuously lacking from the mainstream corporate American media's coverage of Israel and the war on Hamas. Indeed, as Netanyahu arrived in Washington on Sunday, he was greeted by headlines in The New York Times and The Washington Post, as well as cable-news channels such as CNN and MSNBC, that focused on alleged Israeli atrocities against innocent Palestinian Arabs.

The current focus of the media demonization of the Jewish state is

an incident in Gaza in which, after a gunfight with Hamas operatives, Israel Defense Force soldiers fired on others arriving at the scene that they mistakenly thought were there to attack them. Some of those killed or wounded in the exchange may well have been Hamas members, but firing on what proved to be an ambulance was obviously an error. It was also the sort of blunder that, however regrettable, is inevitable in any wartime combat situation. That's especially true when one side—Hamas—is notorious for using ruses involving ambulances to disguise their attacks and transport of arms and terrorists. The responsibility for these casualties, like everyone else killed in Israel or Gaza since Oct. 7, 2023, belongs to Hamas. That is the party that started the nearly 18-month-old war with unspeakable atrocities committed against civilians and whose ongoing goal is to exterminate the Jewish presence in their ancient homeland.

But that wasn't the way the Times or the Post covered the story. Their stories involved a situation in a Gaza combat zone in territory Hamas claims to govern and which it intends to keep in any ceasefire/hostage deal arrangement that Trump might seek to broker. They depicted the dilemma that Israeli soldiers faced in an ongoing armed conflict as if it were a straightforward case of innocents being targeted by tyrannical and bloodthirsty foreign occupiers.

The encounter can be considered regrettable and even mourned as a tragedy. But as we've seen since Oct. 7, the constant drumbeat of demonization of Israel in which every Palestinian death—even though at least half of them are of Hamas combatants and those aiding their cause—are depicted as an atrocity is not without consequences.

It is not merely a narrative about the conflict that has become standard fare in most international outlets for decades. It is the fuel that has fed the fire lit by those who have propagated the myth that the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians is one between a "white" settler-colonial state and an occupied nation of "people of color" who seek liberation and an end to racist discrimination. In this way, Zionism—the national liberation movement of the Jewish people that has effectively decolonized a country and returned it to its indigenous people, the Jews—is painted as an evil movement no different from "Jim Crow" American racism or even a rerun of Nazi-style genocide in which Palestinian Arabs play the part of the Jews in the Holocaust.

In this way, it erases not merely the truth about the war against Hamas but any agency on the part of Palestinians who supported the atrocities on Oct. 7, precisely because they viewed them as part of a legitimate war against a nation that has no right to exist, let alone defend itself.

Oct. 7 was in this way no different from previous Palestinian terror campaigns, whether continuous rocket attacks launched from Gaza since it became a Hamas state in 2007 or the Second Intifada inside Israel, which took the lives of more than 1,000 Israelis from 2000 to 2005 and literally blew up the Oslo Accords attempting to instill peace. The sheer brutality of the orgy of mass murder, rape, torture, kidnapping and wanton destruction of Oct. 7 should have made it clear what the Palestinians' goals are. That terrible day, which took the lives of 1,200 Israeli men, women and children, was a trailer for what they want to do to all of Israel.

Still, it has made no impression on the Palestinians' Western media cheerleaders like Times columnist Nicholas Kristof. His most recent piece was devoted to the familiar argument that Israel is worsening the conflict and creating a new generation of terrorists with its brutality and unwillingness to empower the forces that seek its destruction. Focusing on IDF operations in Judea and Samaria against Hamas's efforts to create a new front in the war, he portrayed a young Arab who said his ambition was to join Hamas.

As critics of every Israeli measure of self-defense have claimed for the last 80 years, Kristof asserts that the defeat of terrorists isn't worth the cost in lives and suffering on the part of those who support them. In his words, fighting Hamas just sows "the seeds of violence," creating new terrorists like the 12-year-old Muhammed Abdul Jalil in

Tulkarem, the sympathetic protagonist of the piece.

Jalil is certainly to be pitied. His home and school in a Palestinian refugee camp in Tulkarem were destroyed in an IDF operation.

Kristof, however, doesn't explain why the descendants of those Arabs who fled their homes during the 1948 Israeli War of Independence have been kept in camps by their leaders, Arab governments, the United Nations and foreign sympathizers with the Palestinian cause as opposed to being resettled elsewhere, like every other refugee population of that era. He takes it as a given that the Palestinians ought to have been kept in place in these camps—now urban neighborhoods—as props to perpetuate the century-old war on Zionism. It is the continuation of that futile war that led to the suffering of Jalil.

Nor does Kristof spare a moment for the way Palestinian schools and media—and the hatred for Israel and Jews—inculcated in young Arabs led to the fighting in Gaza or the “little Gaza” in Tulkarem.

Forcing Israel to turn Tulkarem, and the rest of Judea and Samaria, into the sovereign Palestinian state that Kristof still foolishly believes is the solution to the problem won't end the conflict. After all, Israel withdrew every soldier, settler and settlement from the Gaza Strip in the summer of 2005. That didn't prevent the Palestinians from turning it into a terrorist state from which it could not only launch rockets and arson balloons, but also the genocidal atrocities on Oct. 7.

Preventing the Palestinians from repeating those bestial crimes won't make the conflict worse because after Oct. 7, how could it be?

The Hamas operatives and ordinary Palestinians who carried out those murders, rapes and kidnappings were already convinced that Israel was evil and that all Jews in it, including dovish residents of the border area who were dedicated to helping their Arab neighbors, deserved to die.

The problem is not Israel's reaction to the war being waged against its existence. It's the belief that this conflict—and any act of “resistance” against the Jews undertaken as part of it, including unspeakable barbarism—is justified. That belief is what set in motion the events that have harmed that 12-year-old boy. It has also inspired so many in the United States to seize on such incidents and every Palestinian death in Gaza to vocally support Hamas and echo their demands for Israel's destruction.

Netanyahu and most Israelis have long since stopped paying attention to biased media coverage of the war being waged on them. That is understandable since they have more pressing concerns than answering the likes of Kristof. His moral preening about Israel and his commentary about the conflict, as if nothing the Palestinians believe or have ever done matters, can rightly be dismissed as ignorance masquerading as expertise.

This latest surge in prejudicial coverage of the post-Oct. 7 war is key because it provides ammunition for those on the American left who conquered academia and are on the verge of doing the same to the Democratic Party that hopes to return to power in 2028.

The media assault on Israel may seem like a dull repetition of similarly biased coverage that has been a staple of liberal establishment commentary for the last four decades. But as the anti-Trump resistance ramps up efforts to thwart the president's policies and eventually be in a position to go even further to the left than past Democratic administrations, Jerusalem cannot escape being drawn into this struggle. At this point, it is the pushback against Trump's support for Israel and efforts to rid the education system of the toxic leftist myths that have fueled antisemitism that is at issue. That is what is motivating the latest calumnies, distortions and lies about what the Jewish state is doing to defend itself.

Just as Palestinian indoctrination of hatred against the Jews in their schools and media creates terrorists, it is the spread of critical race theory, intersectionality and settler-colonial teachings that turns young Americans into supporters of a terrorist group like Hamas. In this way, Kristof, the Times and the many other news outlets that engage in a similar campaign of misinformation are far more responsible for the continuation of the war and Palestinian suffering than the actions of Israelis seeking to stop Hamas terrorism. (JNS Apr 7)

Gazans Rally Against Hamas. Will the West Heed their Call?

By Bassem Eid

The people of Gaza have finally turned on Hamas publicly. As a Palestinian human-rights activist, I can't say I'm shocked. Those of us who long for Palestinian governance free of violence and corruption have certainly waited long enough.

The massive protests last week against the terror organization that oppresses Gaza with an iron fist passed the magic 24-hour mark, and the visuals were stunning.

Large crowds of perhaps thousands of people marched through the streets of Beit Lahia in northern Gaza, chanting slogans like “For god's sake, Hamas out” and “Hamas terrorists,” and even calling to free the hostages that Hamas abducted during its horrific invasion of Israel on Oct. 7, 2023.

How did Hamas come to power in Gaza? Through a brutal act of military conquest in 2007 that involved throwing supporters of the Fatah opposition party off of tall buildings, causing a complete political split with the Palestinian Authority government in the West Bank, a split that has now lasted 18 years.

Hamas was never elected to lead Gaza, and while it did win an election for the P.A. legislature in 2006, the P.A. suspended the legislature in 2007 and formally dissolved it in 2018. The P.A.'s leader, Mahmoud Abbas, 89, is currently serving the 21st year of the four-year term he was elected to in 2005.

What kind of government has Hamas given Gazans instead? In a word, theocracy.

Hamas's repression, inspired by a harsh interpretation of Islamic Sharia law, is brutal. Women require the presence of a male guardian to travel outside their homes. LGBTQ+ individuals face torture and execution. Children under Hamas rule are brainwashed into believing that Israelis and Jews, including civilians, are evil and must be destroyed—even at the cost of “martyrdom.”

Hamas is turning the Gazan people into cannon fodder for its endless wars.

Hamas uses its own people as human shields, using residents to disguise military activities, including by launching attacks from civilian sites like schools, hospitals, mosques and churches. As for the lifesaving aid that the world, and Israel, delivered for the benefit of the civilian population in Gaza, even at the height of the military action, Hamas stole and repurposed it to benefit itself. Hamas has even used civilian water pipes to make rockets to attack Israel.

Palestinian polling consistently shows that Hamas is much less popular in Gaza than in the West Bank.

In September 2024, for instance, the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research found that only 39% of Gazans supported Hamas, versus 75% in the West Bank; similarly, only 29% of Gazans supported Hamas's brutal leader, Yahya Sinwar, who planned and launched the Oct. 7 attacks, versus 70% in the West Bank. The Gazan people, having actually suffered the reality of Hamas's rule, are opposed to its hateful ideology, similar to the Europeans who fled the Eastern Bloc after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Hamas consistently attempts to present a falsely moderate face to the West. America's Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff recently said that Hamas “duped” him into thinking it was interested in a deal to release the hostages and end the fighting. No such luck, sadly—the diehards of Hamas are true believers. Their core interest is controlling the Palestinian population, accumulating wealth and armed support from terror states like Iran and Qatar, and waging an endless war on Israel against the wishes of the Gazans themselves.

It's time to listen to the people of Gaza, not the terrorists who control their lives. The ongoing protests against Hamas by the Gazan people are just the beginning. The people of Gaza are well aware that it's not only the captive Israelis but the whole Gazan population who are being used as hostages by these thugs. It's time to listen to the authentic voice of Gaza and set its people free by dismantling Hamas for good. (JNS Apr 8)