

WATCH: Hamas had command tunnel under UN Gaza HQ

"This is one of the central commands of the intelligence. This place is one of the Hamas intelligence units, where they commanded most of the combat."

By REUTERS FEBRUARY 10, 2024 20:37 Updated: FEBRUARY 10, 2024 20:45

Footage from inside the underground tunnel route that passes under an UNRWA funded school and its demolition. [Go to website for 1.75 min video.rdb](#)

Israeli forces have discovered a tunnel network hundreds of meters (yards) long and running partly under UNRWA's Gaza headquarters, the military says, calling it new evidence of Hamas exploitation of the main relief agency for Palestinians.

Army engineers took reporters for foreign news outlets through the passages at a time of crisis for UNRWA, which has launched an internal probe and seen a string of donor countries freeze funding over allegations last month by Israel that some of its staff doubled as Hamas operatives.

The Palestinians have accused Israel of falsifying information to tarnish UNRWA, which employs 13,000 people in the Gaza Strip and has been a lifeline for the aid-dependent population for years. The agency runs schools, primary healthcare clinics and other social services, and distributes aid, describing its activities as purely humanitarian.

UNRWA Headquarters is in Gaza City, among northern areas that Israeli troops and tanks overran early in the four-month-old war against the governing Islamist faction Hamas, sending hundreds of thousands of civilians fleeing southward.

Reporters on the closely escorted trip entered a shaft next to a school on the periphery of the UN compound, descending to the concrete-lined tunnel. Twenty minutes of walking through the stifling hot, narrow and occasionally winding passage brought them underneath UNRWA Headquarters, an army lieutenant-colonel leading the tour said.



Weapons found in an UNRWA building and an explanation by the Commander of the 401st Brigade Combat Team, COL Benny Aharon. (credit: IDF SPOKESPERSON UNIT)

The tunnel, which the military said was 700 meters long and 18 meters deep, bifurcated at times, revealing side-rooms. There was an office space, with steel safes that had been opened and emptied. There was a tiled toilet. One large chamber was packed with computer servers, another with industrial battery stacks.

Hunnels hold advance infrastructure

"Everything is conducted from here. All the energy for the tunnels, which you walked through them

are powered from here," said the lieutenant-colonel, who gave only his first name, Ido.

"This is one of the central commands of the intelligence. This place is one of the Hamas intelligence units, where they commanded most of the combat."

But Ido said Hamas appeared to have evacuated in the face of the Israeli advance, preemptively cutting off communications cables that, in an above-ground part of the tour, he showed running through the floor of the UNRWA Headquarters' basement.

It appeared that heavy Israeli barrages and sustained winter rains may also have played a part in the departure: Several stretches of the tunnel were clogged with dislodged sand and knee-high water.

In a statement, UNRWA said it had vacated the headquarters on Oct. 12, five days after the war began, and was therefore "unable to confirm or otherwise comment" on the Israeli finding.

"UNRWA ... does not have the military and security expertise nor the capacity to undertake military inspections of what is or might be under its premises," the statement said.

"In the past, whenever (a) suspicious cavity was found close to or under UNRWA premises, protest letters were promptly filed to parties to the conflict, including both the de facto authorities in Gaza (Hamas) and the Israeli authorities."

UNRWA's supporters say it is the only agency with the means of aiding Palestinians in deepening humanitarian distress. Israel says the agency is "perforated by Hamas" and must be replaced. Hamas has denied operating in civilian facilities.

"We know that they (Hamas) have people working in UNRWA. We want every international organization to work in Gaza. That is not a problem. Our problem is the Hamas," Ido told reporters.

Lack of cellphone reception in the tunnel made geolocating it as under UNRWA Headquarters impossible. Instead, reporters were asked to put personal items in a bucket that was lowered by rope into a vertical hole on the grounds of the headquarters. They were reunited with the still-tethered items during the tunnel tour.

As a condition of taking journalists on the trip, the Israeli military did not allow photographs of military intelligence such as maps or certain equipment in the convoy of armored vehicles they traveled in. It also requested approval before transmission of photographs and video footage taken on the trip.

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-786234> [The UN is drastically compromised and pro-islamic terrorism and needs to be disbanded as well.-rdb

'We did not know': UNRWA head says agency knew nothing about Hamas data center directly under its Gaza City HQ

By Tol Staff 23min ago



The commissioner-general of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, Philippe Lazzarini, speaks during an interview with The Associated Press at the UNRWA headquarters in Beirut, Lebanon, December 6, 2023. (AP/Bilal Hussein)

UNRWA head Philippe Lazzarini denies any knowledge of the Hamas data center found by Israeli troops underneath the agency's headquarters in Gaza.

In a tweet shortly after tonight's publication of the findings, Lazzarini says UNRWA "did not know what is under its headquarters in Gaza" and that the reports "merit an independent

inquiry that is currently not possible to undertake given Gaza is an active war zone."

He says Israel has "not informed UNRWA officially about the alleged tunnel."

The subterranean data center, seen by The Times of Israel's military correspondent on Thursday, included an electricity room, industrial battery power banks, and living quarters for Hamas terrorists operating the computer servers. Lazzarini says UN staff left the Gaza headquarters on October 12, five days after Hamas launched its October 7 killing spree across southern Israel, as the Israeli military campaign in Gaza began ramping up.

"We have not used that compound since we left it nor are we aware of any activity that may have taken place there," he claims.

UNRWA, he says, "is a human development and humanitarian organization that does not have the military and security expertise nor the capacity to undertake military inspections of what is or might be under its premises."

- UNRWA did not know what is under its headquarters in Gaza.
- UNRWA is made aware of reports through the media regarding a tunnel under the UNRWA Headquarters in Gaza.
- UNRWA staff left its headquarters in Gaza City on 12 October following the Israeli evacuation orders and as...
- Philippe Lazzarini (@UNLazzarini) [February 10, 2024](#)

He says any previous "suspicious" activity was promptly dealt with and "consistently reported in annual reports presented to the General Assembly and made public."

UNRWA has come under increased scrutiny and calls for its disbanding have grown following findings by Israel last month that accused 12 staff members of taking part in the October 7 massacre by Hamas-led terrorists, who killed 1,200 people and took 253 hostages.

Since the allegations became public, UNRWA has seen many of its top donor countries announce funding freezes, leading to concerns that the agency could stop operating in Gaza and elsewhere in the Middle East within weeks.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog-february-10-2024/> **You can believe this bilge if you want to but I don't believe it at all. – rdb]**

Netanyahu said to believe Israel has 1 month to finish Rafah operation amid global ire *After PM directs IDF to draw up plans for southern Gaza, chief of staff reportedly says government needs to first decide what to do with over 1 million Gazans sheltering there*

By [Tol Staff](#) and [Agencies](#) Today, 9:26 am



File: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (left) and IDF chief Herzi Halevi at the start of a security cabinet meeting in Tel Aviv, November 16, 2023. (Haim Zach/GPO)

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reportedly believes that given international pressure, Israel only has one month left to complete its upcoming operation in Rafah, aimed at dismantling the Hamas terror group's remaining operative battalions in Gaza.

According to a Channel 12 news report on Friday evening, the prime minister recently told the small war cabinet that the operation in Gaza's southernmost city, where more than half of the

coastal enclave's 2.3 million residents are sheltering, will need to be completed before the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which begins around March 10.

The assessment was reportedly made during a discussion about the pending Rafah operation, during which IDF Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi told Netanyahu that the Israel Defense Forces was ready to operate, but that it needed the government to first decide what it wanted to do with the displaced Gazans sheltering there.

The report came as US President Joe Biden was coming under growing domestic pressure to push Israel on a ceasefire in its war with Hamas, now in its fourth month, though he and other US officials have continued to stand behind Israel's right to defend itself against the terror group.

However, **the US has expressed increasing concern over the civilian death toll, suffering and humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, and the lack of clarity from Israel regarding the "day after" in Gaza.**

The IDF chief of staff was also quoted by Channel 12 as saying that the military also needs to know the government's plans for the Philadelphi Route, the 14-kilometer security road along Gaza's border with Egypt.

The latter issue needs to be resolved to maintain cooperation with Egypt, given Cairo's concerns about any Israeli operation along the border and amid fears that Palestinians fleeing Rafah could try and cross into Egypt. Channel 12 claimed that Netanyahu has dragged his feet on reaching decisions on either issue.

Earlier on Friday, the Prime Minister's Office announced that Netanyahu had directed the IDF to draft a plan for evacuating the civilians in Rafah so that the IDF operation could move forward. But, Channel 12 suggested that the statement was little more than public posturing given that the army has already crafted such plans and is waiting for directives from the political echelon.



Palestinians walk along a crowded main street in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on February 8, 2024, amid the ongoing war between Israel and the Palestinian terror group Hamas. (Mohammed Abed/AFP)

"It is impossible to achieve the goal of the war of eliminating Hamas by leaving four Hamas battalions in Rafah," Netanyahu's office had said in the statement. "On the contrary, it is clear that intense activity in Rafah requires that civilians evacuate the areas of combat."

The **PMO** announcement came amid **US** statements that

Israel has not conducted the pre-operational planning necessary to ensure that civilians will be kept out of harm's way and that failure to do so risks "disaster."

The **United Nations was similarly concerned, saying that Palestinian civilians in Rafah need to be protected, but that there should not be any forced mass displacement.** "We're extremely worried about the fate of civilians in Rafah," UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said on Friday. **[The UN and US need to demand that Egypt accept them into the Sinai which they received back from Israel in 1982 when Israel won the territory after a war. – rdb]**

"What is clear is that people need to be protected, but we also do not want to see any forced displacement — forced mass displacement — of people, which is by definition against their will," Dujarric said. "We would not support in any way forced displacement, which goes against international law."

The **UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) also voiced concern for civilians in Rafah on Friday:** "The unprecedented density of Rafah's population makes it nearly impossible to protect civilians in the event of ground attacks."

"The congestion in Rafah has reached a point where normal routes are blocked by tents set up by families seeking any flat, clean space available," the UN body added.



A woman and children sit outside tents sheltering displaced Palestinians in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on February 8, 2024. (Mohammed Abed/AFP)

War erupted after Hamas's October 7 massacres, which saw some 3,000 terrorists burst across the border from Gaza by land, air and sea, killing some 1,200 people and seizing over 250 hostages of all ages, mostly civilians, many amid horrific acts of brutality.

In response, Israel vowed to eliminate Hamas and launched a wide-scale military operation to destroy the terror group's military and governance capabilities and return the hostages.

Meanwhile, the IDF on Friday confirmed a Palestinian Red Crescent Society report that troops had raided a hospital in the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis, which is the focus of the IDF's current thrust.

"The occupation (Israeli) forces stormed Al-Amal hospital and started searching it. We're finding it difficult to communicate with our crews inside the hospital," said a statement from the PRCS which runs the facility.



This picture taken from Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip, shows smoke rising over buildings in Khan Younis during Israeli bombardment on February 8, 2024, as fighting continues between Israel and the Palestinian terror group Hamas. (Mahmud Hams/AFP)

The IDF told AFP that the operation was carried out "based on intelligence indicating Hamas is conducting terrorist activities" in the hospital. "A precise sweep and clear operation to locate terrorists and dismantle terrorist infrastructure in the vicinity has commenced," the army said.

Later on Friday, the PRCS said the IDF had arrested eight of its team members at the hospital, including "four doctors, as well as four wounded

individuals and five patients' companions."

Al-Amal has been caught in fierce fighting between IDF troops and Hamas operatives, with the Red Crescent reporting "intense artillery shelling and heavy gunfire" continuing around the hospital on Thursday. The medical organization has in recent days made repeated pleas for supplies and protection, reporting severe shortages of oxygen, medicines and fuel to power the hospital.

The PRCS also [claimed](#) in a post on X, formerly Twitter, that IDF troops "stole money from PRCS, employees, patients and companions, as well as their personal belongings."

Earlier this week, the Red Crescent said some 8,000 people who had sought shelter at Al-Amal and its nearby Khan Younis headquarters were evacuated. Around 40 displaced people, 80 patients and 100 staff remained following the evacuation, the PRCS said Monday.

Israel has repeatedly said Hamas was using civilians as human shields, including by locating operations bases under hospitals, launching rockets from schools and shelters, building tunnels shafts under children's bedrooms, storing weapons in and around schools and mosques, and embedding itself within civilians amid the ongoing war.



Israeli soldiers show the media an underground tunnel found underneath Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, November 22, 2023. (AP Photo/Victor R. Caivano, File)

Captured Hamas terrorists have confirmed some of the human shield claims, explaining for example that Hamas knows Israel will not bomb hospitals, medical centers and facilities.

The UN said on Wednesday that there are no fully functioning hospitals left in the Palestinian territory, while just over a third of them are working at limited capacity.

Health facilities have been overwhelmed by the

scale of casualties, with more than 67,000 people wounded and at least 27,947 people killed, according to the health ministry in the Hamas-run territory. These figures cannot be independently verified, and are believed to include both civilians and Hamas members killed in Gaza, including as a consequence of terror groups' own rocket misfires.

The IDF says it has killed over 10,000 operatives in Gaza, in addition to some 1,000 terrorists inside Israel on October 7. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-said-to-believe-israel-has-1-month-to-finish-rafah-operation-amid-global-ire/>

Top Hamas official in Lebanon survives alleged Israeli strike; 3 others killed

Basel Salah, believed injured, is a recruiter for the terror group; Hezbollah member among dead in attack 40 kilometers north of border; rocket strikes building in Kiryat Shmona

By [Agencies](#) and [Emanuel Fabian](#) Today, 6:49 pm



Lebanese army soldiers gather around a damaged car near the coastal town of Jadra, south Lebanon, February 10, 2024. (AP Photo/Mohammed Zaatar)

A senior Hamas member targeted in an alleged Israeli airstrike in Lebanon 40 kilometers from the Israeli border survived the attack Saturday, a Palestinian security official told AFP, as rockets continued to target Israeli northern communities.

Two other people were killed in the strike in Lebanon, including one Hezbollah operative.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency said an Israeli drone struck a car in the coastal town of Jadra, about 40 kilometers (25 miles) from the border.

The target of the alleged Israeli airstrike was Basel Salah, a Hamas operative charged with recruiting and managing members of the terror group, including in the West Bank, The Times of Israel learned.

The Hamas unit Salah was a member of was headed by Azzam Al-Aqraa, who was killed in the alleged Israeli strike in Beirut last month that also killed the terror group's deputy leader Saleh al-Arouri.

Salah, whose condition is unknown but who is believed to have been injured in Saturday's strike, was allegedly involved in recruiting Hamas members for years, even amid the war in Gaza.

The strike took place deeper into Lebanese territory than the usual exchanges of fire between Hamas ally Hezbollah and the Israeli military, which have been mostly limited to the border region.

There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military.

Watch: The aftermath of an alleged Israeli drone strike in the village of [#Jadra](#), north of [#Lebanon](#)'s port city of Saida. <https://t.co/0uORWFYle4> pic.twitter.com/7DQKt1gBvw

— Al Arabiya English (@AlArabiya_Eng) [February 10, 2024](#)

Northern communities continued to be targeted by projectiles throughout Saturday, with a missile fired from Lebanon striking a building in Kiryat Shmona, causing damage. Local authorities said there were no reports of injuries.

A missile fired from Lebanon struck a building in Kiryat Shmona, causing damage.

Local **authorities say there are no reports of injuries.**

The apparent anti-tank guided missile did not set off alarms in the city. pic.twitter.com/yySndttxQg

— Emanuel (Mannie) Fabian (@manniefabian) [February 10, 2024](#)

In response to Hezbollah's ongoing attacks in the north, the IDF said fighter jets carried out strikes against a building used by the terror group in south Lebanon's Bint Jbeil, an observation post in Markaba, three command centers in Naqoura and Ayta ash-Shab where members of the terror group were gathered, and two other sites in Khiam and Marwahin.

לפני זמן קצר, מטוסי קרב תקפו מספר מטרות טרור של ארגון הטרור חיזבאללה בשטח לבנון.

בין המטרות שנתקפו, שלוש מפקדות צבאיות במרחבים א-נקורה ועייאת א-שעב בהן פעלו מחבלי הארגון, לצד שתי תשתיות טרור במרחבים אל-חיאם ומרווחין.

מוקדם יותר היום הותקפה תשתית טרור נוספת במרחב הכפר בסתן. pic.twitter.com/ZhZcFDe4aL

— Israeli Air Force (@IAFsite) [February 10, 2024](#)

The IDF also said it shelled the launch sites of three projectiles that were fired from Lebanon toward the northern community of Shlomi. The projectiles landed in open areas.

On **Friday night the IDF had said it struck a Hezbollah command center** and another site used by the terror group's air defense unit.

לפני זמן קצר, מטוסי קרב תקפו מבנה צבאי במרחב בינת ג'בל ועמדת תצפית במרחב מרכבא.

בנוסף, אתמול מטוסי קרב תקפו מפקדה צבאית ואתר צבאי בשטח לבנון ששימשו את יחידת ההגנה האווירית בארגון הטרור <<pic.twitter.com/OpF2YFZINm

— צבא ההגנה לישראל (@idfonline) [February 10, 2024](#)

Meanwhile, the IDF said a suspected drone infiltration alarm that sounded in northern Israel on Saturday afternoon was a false alarm.

At the **same time, the Iran-backed terror group claimed Saturday that it had seized an Israeli Skylark drone over Lebanese air space "in good condition."** The Skylark is a small, unmanned aerial vehicle typically used for surveillance and produced by Israel-based weapons manufacturer Elbit Systems.

Many such comparatively inexpensive unmanned aerial vehicles, which are used primarily for reconnaissance missions, have crashed in hostile territory over the years.

As **fighting raged between Israel and Hezbollah, Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian met in Beirut with Lebanese leaders, including the country's caretaker prime minister, parliament speaker and the terror group's chief Hassan Nasrallah.**

Hezbollah published pictures from the meeting that took place in an undisclosed location.

The terror **group said the two discussed developments in Gaza, the situation in southern**

Lebanon — where Hezbollah has traded fire daily with Israel across the border since Hamas's October 7 attack — and other fronts on the "axis of resistance."

This handout picture provided by Hezbollah's media office on February 10, 2024, shows Lebanese Shiite terror group's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian at an undisclosed location in Lebanon. (Photo by Hezbollah's Media Office / AFP)

At a press conference with his Lebanese counterpart, Amir-Abdollahian said neither Iran nor Lebanon sought a wider war.

"Iran and Lebanon confirm that war is not the solution and that we absolutely never sought to

expand it," he said.



So far, the skirmishes on the border have resulted in six civilian deaths on the Israeli side, as well as the deaths of nine IDF soldiers and reservists. There have also been several attacks from Syria, without any injuries.

Hezbollah has named 186 members who have been killed by Israel during the ongoing skirmishes, mostly in Lebanon but some also in Syria. In Lebanon, another 25 operatives from other terror groups, a Lebanese soldier and at least 19 civilians, three of whom were journalists, have been killed.

Hezbollah has intensified its attacks over the past two days, firing a barrage of over 30 rockets at northern Israel on both Thursday and Friday evening.

Top Israeli officials have repeatedly threatened to go to war in Lebanon following the campaign to root out Hamas in Gaza, with the aim of driving Hezbollah away from the border in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which ended the Second Lebanon War in 2006.

Israel has said it cannot tolerate Hezbollah forces along its border, where they could launch a murderous attack on civilians in a similar vein to Hamas's October 7 onslaught.

It has increasingly warned that if the international community does not push Hezbollah away from the border through diplomatic means, Israel will take action.

Due to the concerns of another war between Israel and Hezbollah, Lebanese officials said Thursday that foreign diplomats have intensified their efforts to restore calm to the volatile Lebanon-Israel border in parallel with the ongoing negotiations for a hostage deal and accompanying truce in Gaza. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/top-hamas-official-in-lebanon-survives-alleged-israeli-strike-3-others-killed/>

WATCH: IDF eliminates three senior Hamas officers in Rafah - report

The strike comes as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has ordered the IDF to begin preparations to enter Rafah.

By [JERUSALEM POST STAFF](#) FEBRUARY 10, 2024 12:48 Updated: FEBRUARY 10, 2024 19:11

IDF strike on Hamas terrorist operatives in Rafah. February 10, 2024. (Credit: IDF Spokesperson's Unit) [Video at website. rdb](#)

Three senior members of the Hamas police in Rafah were killed as a result of an attack on their vehicle in the Tel al-Sultan neighborhood, west of Rafah, according to Israeli media reports from Saturday afternoon.

Those killed are the director of investigations Ahmed Eliakubi, his deputy Iman Rantisi, and Ibrahim Shatt. Eliakubi was responsible for the security provisions for senior Hamas leaders and served as a senior commander in the Rafah district.

The strike comes as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has ordered the IDF to begin preparations to enter Rafah.

Netanyahu ordered the IDF to [begin planning to evacuate civilians](#) from Rafah into areas of Gaza cleared of Hamas units.



Displaced Palestinians, who fled their houses due to Israeli strikes, take shelter in a tent camp, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, at the border with Egypt, in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip, February 8, 2024. (credit: REUTERS/IBRAHEEM ABU MUSTAFA)

Impossible to leave Hamas in Rafah

"It is impossible to achieve the goal of the war without eliminating Hamas, and by leaving four Hamas battalions in Rafah," the statement noted.

"On the contrary, it is clear that intense activity in Rafah requires that civilians evacuate the areas of combat."

Netanyahu was criticized for the plan by Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas told the UN, " [Israel] taking this step threatens security and peace in the region and the world. It crosses all red lines."

"We're extremely [worried about the fate of civilians in Rafah](#)," UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said on Friday. <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-786183>

'Political manifesto:' Israeli FM Smotrich attacks Israel's credit rating downgrade

"Moody's announcement of the downgrade is not based on serious economic arguments and is entirely a political manifesto based on a pessimistic and unfounded geopolitical worldview."

By [JERUSALEM POST STAFF](#) FEBRUARY 10, 2024 19:57

FINANCE MINISTER Bezalel Smotrich attends a discussion on the state budget, at the Knesset Finance Committee, in July. The state budget for 2024 and the next few years must be fundamentally redrafted, say the writers. (photo credit: YONATAN SINDEL/FLASH 90)



Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich attacked the credit rating firm "Moody's" on Saturday for deciding to lower Israel's credit rating from "A1" to "A2" due to concerns over the ongoing war on Friday.

"The Israeli economy is strong by all measures. It is capable of sustaining all war efforts, on the front line and home front, until, with God's

help, victory is achieved," he said in a response to the decision published on Friday.

" Hamas-ISIS embarked on the terrible massacre at Simchat Torah with the aim of [harming the State of Israel](#) and the Jewish people in soul and body and bringing about their annihilation," he continued. "Since then, Hamas and the whole world have met a united Israeli heroism with the ability to endure, determination to defeat evil, and shine anew the good in Israel and the world. Hamas will not defeat us, neither security-wise nor economically."

He **then attacked the decision, claiming it to be baseless and unfounded.**

"Moody's announcement of the downgrade is not based on serious economic arguments and is entirely a political manifesto based on a pessimistic and unfounded geopolitical worldview, which reflects a lack of confidence in Israel's security and national strength, and apparently also a lack of confidence in the righteousness of its path in the face of its enemies," he said.

"Moody's is not even able to define Hamas and Hezbollah as terrorist organizations in its announcement and implies that it would have avoided the downgrade if only Israel had accepted the suicide plan offered to it by members of the international community to stop the war and establish an Arab terrorist state in Gaza and Judea and Samaria," he said, citing the wording of the official report.

Smotrich affirmed that international opinion will not affect Israel's decision-making

"We do not derive our national, security, social, and economic strength from how we are judged in the world, but from a deep belief in the righteousness of the way, which is based on a glorious past of thousands of years and a commitment to an even more glorious future," he continued. "Moody's announcement will not undermine this either and will not weaken us in the war for our independence and sovereignty in our homeland."

He ended his statement on a more positive note, commending fellow members of the government and financial institutions in Israel

"I thank the Accountant General, the Governor of the Bank of Israel, and the other professionals in the Israeli economy for their efforts with the rating company. Together we will win Israel and continue to lead the Israeli economy with responsibility and discretion and steer it to a safe shore."

These **statements come off the back of credit ratings agency Moody's concluding its review of Israel and downgrading the country to "A2" from "A1", citing material political and fiscal risks** for the country due to its war with the Palestinian terrorist group Hamas on Friday.

The **credit firm claims that their downgrade comes from a lack of confidence in the war ending any time soon, stating,** "While fighting in Gaza may diminish in intensity or pause, there is currently no agreement to end the hostilities durably and no agreement on a longer-term plan that would fully restore and eventually strengthen security for Israel." <https://www.jpost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-786228>

Yemen's Houthis hold funeral for 17 members killed during US-UK air strikes

The Houthi campaign has disrupted international shipping, causing some companies to suspend transits through the Red Sea and instead take the much longer, costlier journey around Africa.

By [REUTERS](#) FEBRUARY 10, 2024 16:28 **Updated:** FEBRUARY 10, 2024 20:20



A Houthi follower holds ammunition as he participates in a parade as part of a 'popular army' mobilization campaign by the movement, in Sanaa, Yemen February 7, 2024. (photo credit: REUTERS/KHALED ABDULLAH)

Yemen's Iran-backed Houthis held a funeral on Saturday for at least 17 terrorists killed during joint US-British air strikes, the Houthi-run Saba news agency said.

The Houthis have launched waves of exploding drones and missiles at commercial ships since Nov. 19 in what they say is a response to Israel's [military operations in Gaza](#), prompting Britain and the United States to start retaliatory strikes last month.

"These crimes will not discourage the Yemeni people from continuing their support and backing of

their brothers in the Gaza Strip," Saba said in its coverage of the funerals.

US conducted strikes against ships in Red Sea

The US Central Command (CENTCOM) said on Saturday its forces conducted self-defense strikes against two mobile unmanned surface vessels (USV), four mobile anti-ship cruise missiles, and one mobile land attack cruise missile (LACM) that were prepared to launch strikes against ships in the Red Sea.

"CENTCOM identified these missiles and USVs in Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen and determined they presented an imminent threat to US Navy ships and merchant vessels in the region," it said in a statement. "These actions will protect freedom of navigation and make international waters safer and more secure for US Navy and merchant vessels."



Participants take the oath of allegiance to the Houthi movement during a parade in a show of force amid a standoff in the Red Sea and US-led airstrikes on Houthi targets, in Sanaa, Yemen, February 8, 2024. (credit: REUTERS/KHALED ABDULLAH)

Look at this picture. Who are that Nazi's in the middle east? It is the islamists. They might as well be saluting Adolf Hitler - rdb

Besides the airstrikes on Houthi targets in Yemen, the US and Britain have returned the militia to a list of terrorist groups as turmoil from the Israel-Hamas war spreads through the region.

The Houthi campaign has disrupted international shipping, causing some companies to suspend transits through the Red Sea and instead take the

much longer, costlier journey around Africa. <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-786191>

Kremlin explains why Putin spoke to Tucker Carlson

Moscow saw the interview as an opportunity to be heard in the West, spokesman Dmitry Peskov has said

10 Feb, 2024 16:27

Russian President Vladimir Putin's interview with conservative American journalist Tucker Carlson this week provided a great opportunity to make people in the West think, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov has said.

Speaking to TASS on Saturday, Peskov said the two-hour interview, which largely revolved around relations between Moscow and Kiev, made it possible for Putin to be heard in the West.

Asked about the interest the interview has sparked, garnering over 100 million views in just one day on Carlson's X account (formerly Twitter) alone, the spokesman replied that the numbers do not necessarily equate to universal support from viewers.

"We cannot expect that our point of view will receive support. The main thing for us is that our president is heard. And if he is heard, this means more people will think about whether he is right or not. They will think, at least," Peskov stated.

The spokesman also referred to Putin's remarks during the interview when he acknowledged that it is difficult to resist Western propaganda, claiming the US and Britain control the major media outlets.

"The Anglo-Saxons, one way or another, own all the largest broadcasters, all the largest newspapers, and so on. And against this background, the main thing is to give people the opportunity to become acquainted with our point of view. And in this regard, this is a very good opportunity."

The interview, which was published on Thursday, was the first sit-down between a US media personality and the Russian president since the beginning of the conflict between Moscow and Kiev in early 2022. It covered a wide range of topics, while largely revolving around the ongoing hostilities. The Russian president also offered a lengthy review of the centuries of shared history between Russia and Ukraine, arguing that the latter has been long used by the Collective West to antagonize Moscow after the collapse of the USSR.

<https://www.rt.com/russia/592236-kremlin-putin-carlson-explained/>

US doesn't want talks – Kremlin

Washington is well aware of Moscow's position but lacks the "political will" to engage in negotiations with Russia, Dmitry Peskov has said

10 Feb, 2024 19:21

The US has not shown a readiness to negotiate with Russia and apparently lacks the "political will" to do so, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told the news outlet TASS on Saturday.

Peskov made the remarks when asked whether the interview that Russian President Vladimir Putin gave to conservative American journalist Tucker Carlson earlier this week will help communicate Moscow's position on various issues to Washington. **"The US authorities know our position very well, they are perfectly aware of all of Putin's main points,"** the spokesman stated.

However, the US has not demonstrated any readiness to actually engage in negotiations with Russia, according to Peskov.

"This is not an issue of knowledge, but an issue of desire. The desire to do something to get on to the track of negotiations. We have not yet seen such a desire or the political will for this [in the US]," Peskov emphasized.

Nevertheless, **the Carlson interview provided a great opportunity for the Russian president to communicate his position to a wider audience in the West,** according to Peskov.

"The main thing for us is that our president is heard. And should he be heard, that means more people will think about whether he is right or not. They will think, at least," he stated when asked about the interest the interview has sparked.

The **interview has elicited a "hysterical" reaction from the US authorities and mainstream media, who rushed to warn the public against watching it,** Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova has claimed.

"They've had a hysterical fit – the White House, the Department of State, all the mainstream media are shouting at the top of their lungs one thing only: don't watch [the interview], and that an American journalist shouldn't conduct such an interview," Zakharova told Russia's Izvestia newspaper on Friday, describing such reaction to the conversation as a *"phenomenal"* one.

The two-hour-long conversation, which largely revolved around relations between Moscow and Kiev and the ongoing conflict, garnered over 100 million views in just one day on Carlson's X account (formerly Twitter) alone.

The interview, which was published on Thursday, was the first between the Russian president and a US journalist since the Ukraine conflict began in February 2022. <https://www.rt.com/russia/592241-us-russia-talks-prospects/>

Ex-UK PM slams Tucker Carlson as 'traitor' for Putin interview



Boris Johnson has invoked Hitler in denouncing the journalist's sit-down with the Russian leader as an "unholy charade"

10 Feb, 2024 16:26

© Getty Images / Brandon Bell

Former UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson has denounced journalist Tucker Carlson as a "traitor" for failing to antagonize President Vladimir Putin

during his interview with the Russian leader in a video posted on X (formerly Twitter) on Friday.

"We must not fall for this tissue of lies, above all the notion that Putin is somehow fated to succeed in Ukraine," Johnson said. "On the contrary, he is doomed to fail."

The British politician, who resigned in disgrace in 2022 amid mounting scandals regarding his government's flouting of its own Covid-19 rules, implored his followers to read the lengthy condemnation of Carlson's sit-down with the Russian leader he penned for the Daily Mail.

Johnson's op-ed repeatedly invoked Adolf Hitler, insisting that Carlson was being *"a traitor to journalism"* by playing *"Dictaphone to the dictator."* **[Tucker is undoubtedly one of the few true investigative journalists left in the world because the rest of the media have been bought out by the so called MSM and government political hacks. Rdb]**

The Russian president's extended explanation of the history of Ukraine was merely a *"mixture of semi-masticated Wikipedia and outright falsehood"* – insisting Putin *"demolished his own thesis"* by *"reckless and criminal violence"* against Ukraine.

Carlson had fallen down on the job by not asking *"tough questions"* or taking him to task *"for the torture, the rapes, the blowing up of kindergartens"* supposedly committed by the Russian military – atrocities often invoked by Ukraine's supporters in the West in the absence of evidence.

Johnson especially took issue with what he called the "ludicrous suggestion that the UK government persuaded the Ukrainians to fight on, rather than surrender to Putin's tender mercies, in the spring of 2022," claiming that *"every member of the Ukrainian government will confirm"* that it was Kiev that made the decision to tear up the peace treaty. **[I do believe that that issue has been verified by independent people. L- rdb]**

"Nothing and no one could have stopped those lion-hearted Ukrainians from fighting for their country – and nothing will," he wrote.

He likened Carlson's interview to the American newspapers that published sympathetic interviews with Hitler, insisting Putin was *"exactly like"* the Nazi bogeyman because he discoursed at length about *"the alleged injustices suffered by speakers of his native tongue."*

Johnson infamously pressured Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky not to accept what he called a "bad peace deal" in May of 2022, insisting that negotiating with Putin was the equivalent of reasoning with "a crocodile when it's got your leg in its jaws," given the Russians' advances through Ukrainian territory.

After **successfully scuttling the negotiations**, the British leader declared through a spokesperson that **"the world must avoid any outcome where Putin's unwarranted aggression appears to have paid off."**

The **15-point peace deal negotiated between Russia and Ukraine in Istanbul would have involved Kiev renouncing its efforts to join NATO and committing to neutrality in exchange for a withdrawal of Russian troops from parts of the country.** <https://www.rt.com/news/592240-boris-johnson-tucker-putin-traitor/>

Mining company finds 2.34 BILLION tons of rare earth minerals in Wyoming!

'Exceeded our wildest dreams'

By [Bob Unruh](#) Published February 9, 2024 at 2:06pm

Much of today's high tech, for computer, automobile, communications and military applications, requires ingredients called rare earth minerals.

They are not widely available and China, with an estimated 44 million metric tons of resources, has been the source for some 95% of those components used around the world.

That **makes the U.S. dependent on an unfriendly Communist regime** for significant advances in its technology.

But **that could be changing**, as a report in the Daily Mail reveals that a mining company has **announced the discovery of "more than 2.34 billion metric tons" in Wyoming.**

"American Rare Earths Inc announced that the reserves near Wheatland dramatically surpass the Asian nation's 44 million metric tons, saying it 'exceeded our wildest dreams' after drilling only about 25 percent of the property," the report said.

It **explained the results come from the company's stake in hundreds of mining claims across**

6,320 acres of land in the Halleck Creek Project, in southeastern Wyoming not far from Nebraska and Colorado, as well as mineral leases on another 1,844 acres of the Cowboy State Mine.

Already confirmed are minerals like neodymium, praseodymium, samarium, dysprosium and terbium.

Such **are used in smartphones, hybrid vehicles, military applications and more.**

For example, the report **noted magnets made from neodymium "are used in hard disc drives and mobile phones,** while **praseodymium is used in high-strength alloys in aircraft engines.** Dysprosium is used to make control rods in nuclear reactors, and terbium is used in low-energy lightbulbs and mercury lamps."

Company **CEO Don Swartz said China wants "market dominance," but the issue now is "a race."**

The company began test drilling a year ago, with positive results right away.

Now, **plans are being made for open pit mining,** the most common method for mining projects, a process that allows mining of up to 20,000 tons a day.

The report noted that this is not the only positive news about rare earths coming out of Wyoming.

"U.S.-based Ramaco Resources has a stake near Sheridan, Wyoming that could be worth around \$37 billion," the report noted.

There, Ramaco CEO Randall Atkins explained resources had been tested only down to about 200 feet, but research now is going down to 1,000 feet. <https://www.wnd.com/2024/02/mining-company-finds-2-34-billion-tons-rare-earth-minerals-wyoming/>

OP ED

Why Biden Is Threatening to Veto Aid to Israel

David Harsanyi | Feb 09, 2024

President Joe Biden promised to veto any stand-alone aid bill for Israel, and House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries and most House Democrats voted against one. The administration maintains that Israel's security is so "sacred," it must be tied to a doomed legislative package containing entirely unrelated issues that deal with border security and Ukrainian aid.

Which, of course, makes absolutely zero sense.

Does anyone believe that the president would veto a stand-alone bill for Ukrainian aid? Or what about a stand-alone bill for "humanitarian" aid to Palestinians? Color me skeptical. Now, a stand-alone border security bill? That he'd definitely veto. Priorities, you see.

In the years before former President Barack Obama, a vote to help a longtime ally against a proxy terror army that -- not incidentally -- murdered 30-plus American citizens would have been a no-brainer. Today, a Democrat who takes an unrepentantly pro-Israel position puts himself in a precarious position. Biden is free to play games with Israeli aid because there will be no political repercussions. Most Democrats don't really care anymore. And those who do are in the pro-Hamas wing -- whether openly or functionally.

"Forget No Labels. Biden's Third-Party Peril is on the Left," warns Politico. Numerous polls, writes Jonathan Martin, find that young leftists are angry about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Not the mass rape and murder of civilians, mind you, but Israel's efforts to root out the attackers. Many of these people are socialist ideologues, many are identitarian dimwits, and others are just antisemites. Some, like members of "the Squad," are all of the above. Whatever the case, they are always "angry" at Israel. These are the people who were demanding "ceasefires" before Israel had even begun retaliating for Oct 7.

Still, the situation remains something of a balancing act for Biden. There are still enough Jewish Democrats and independents who feel a historic kinship with Israel. Enough that the president doesn't attack Israel unequivocally. Like Obama before him, Biden uses Benjamin Netanyahu as a strawman, framing the prime minister as some kind of warmongering fascist.

Here's a little-known reality: Right or Left, Netanyahu or someone else, no Israeli prime minister would act any differently in Gaza. Israeli voters rightly demand it. Just as it would have been impossible to lead the United States after 9/11 on a plank that gave al-Qaeda a pass, it would be impossible to hold power in Israel and allow Hamas to continue to operate next door.

In any event, Biden acts like a statesman in public but simultaneously leaks angry quotes about Netanyahu to placate the growing anti-Israel Left. Recently, for example, we learned that Biden supposedly called Israel's prime

minister a "bad f---ing guy." (Notice that Democrats have tougher words for Israelis than they ever do for mullahs who murder Americans.)

This leak reminded me of the time in 2014 when Obama's stenographer Jeffrey Goldberg "reported" that White House officials referred to Netanyahu as "chickens--t." Now I don't mean to demean people like Ben Rhodes, who survived a creative writing MFA program at New York University, but Netanyahu did serve in the Israel Defense Forces, saw combat and led a special force unit that specialized in freeing hijacked planes. Netanyahu was shot in one of these operations. So, I'm going to go out on a limb and say he's less of a coward than anonymous White House officials. Certainly, he is a better "guy" than the gaggle of Rob Malley types the president surrounds himself with.

A few weeks ago, good guy Biden was accusing Israel of engaging in "indiscriminate bombing," which he knows is a lie. "Like everyone in the administration and any Democrat with a pulse," Politico explains, Biden is "deeply suspicious of Benjamin Netanyahu." The president's "deep-seated fear," we learn, is that Netanyahu "is eager to drag the U.S. into a wider war in the Middle East."

This is the favorite blood libel of radical Democrats and far-right influencers. They must be quite excited to hear that the president is no longer "hypnotized" by Israel's evil, as Rep. Ilhan Omar might say.

That said, the United States has no obligation to assist any nation -- not even a longtime ally that shares our objectives and values. I suspect Democrats are probably a couple of presidential cycles away from turning entirely against Israel. Still, it is peculiar that the same people who are purportedly terrified of being dragged into a Middle East war by Israel have no deep-seated fears about the perils of funding a war against a nuclear power in Europe. On the contrary, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who runs a country far more authoritarian (not to mention corrupt) than Netanyahu's Israel, is treated as the sainted defender of democracy by Washington and the media.

It's almost as if the arguments being used by Democrats to distance themselves from Israel don't really make any sense.

David Harsanyi is a senior editor at The Federalist. Harsanyi is a nationally syndicated columnist and author of five books [Why Biden Is Threatening to Veto Aid to Israel \(townhall.com\)](https://townhall.com/columnists/davidharsanyi/2021/05/11/why-biden-is-threatening-to-veto-aid-to-israel)

The Dangerous Global Order with a Nuclear Armed Iran

by [Majid Rafizadeh](#) February 10, 2024 at 5:00 am

- America's actions now – or else its inaction – will determine the ability of global powers to mold an international order that either upholds democratic values or succumbs to the dominance of terror groups and dictatorships.
- Inaction or a failure to adopt a resolute stance against the ascent of Iran as a state sponsor of terrorism armed with nuclear capabilities, can only pave the way for a world where autocratic regimes and extremist factions dictate the course of international affairs.

Inaction or a failure to adopt a resolute stance against the ascent of Iran as a state sponsor of terrorism armed with nuclear capabilities, can only pave the way for a world where autocratic regimes and extremist factions dictate the course of international affairs.

As Iran is on the verge of achieving a significant milestone in obtaining nuclear weapons, concerns are mounting over the Biden administration's lack of a coherent strategy to prevent Iran from going nuclear. Since the Biden administration took office, Iran has been rapidly advancing its uranium enrichment, approaching levels of [83.7%](#) close to the [90%](#) needed for nuclear weapons capability.

The consequences of Iran possessing nuclear weapons should not be downplayed or overlooked. The Iranian regime has repeatedly threatened to [annihilate Israel](#), and views that goal a central pillar of its ideology. This commitment is [rooted](#) in religious prophecies from the regime's founder, [Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini](#), and current Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, foreseeing the eventual eradication of Israel.

General Hossein Salami, chief of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), has explicitly [outlined](#) the regime's aggressive stance, stating on Iran's state-controlled Channel 2 TV in 2019, "Our strategy is to erase Israel from the global political map." Khamenei's 416-page guidebook, *Palestine*, further [emphasizes](#) the regime's dedication to Israel's destruction.

The Iranian regime is also committed to exporting its Islamist system globally. [Embedded](#) in its constitution is the prioritization of revolutionary ideals, aiming at propagating its governance system in line with its version of Shiite Islam. This mission, outlined in the preamble, seeks to [create](#) conditions that align with the values of Islam, and that foster the revolution at home and abroad. Since 1979, the regime has expanded its influence across the Middle East. The regime has deployed the IRGC and its expeditionary Quds Force to influence regions from Yemen to Lebanon, Syria, and the

Gaza Strip through proxy groups such as the Houthi militia, Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) in Iraq.

Expanding on the multifaceted concerns surrounding Iran's pursuit of nuclear capabilities, a critical dimension lies in the unsettling prospect of nuclear weapons falling into the hands of the regime's extensive network of proxies. This network includes the above-mentioned groups as well as the Syrian regime, Iran's allies in South America, and the Taliban in Afghanistan.

The intricate web of alliances and shared interests creates a scenario where the Iranian regime could extend its influence by providing such capabilities to like-minded allies and proxy groups. Iran's establishment of weapons factories abroad and its production of advanced ballistic missiles, including precision-guided ones, underscores the urgency of the situation.

This adds a layer of complexity to the global security landscape, raising the stakes and emphasizing the immediate need for a comprehensive strategy to address not only the imminent nuclear threat from Iran but also the broader implications of potential proliferation among its network of proxies and allies.

To address these concerns, two critical policy considerations emerge. First, the consideration of a military option looms large on the strategic horizon. This involves a meticulous examination of targeting Iran's nuclear infrastructure, thereby disrupting its capacity to advance its nuclear program. A decisive and preemptive strike is necessary to thwart the imminent danger posed by a nuclear-armed Iran.

Second, a fundamental reevaluation of the West's diplomatic and economic engagements with Iran emerges as a crucial policy imperative. The prevailing practice of rewarding the regime with substantial financial incentives, amounting to billions of dollars, and engaging in trade relationships contributes to the funding of Iran's nuclear ambitions. Consequently, a recalibration of Western policies is needed, with a focus on imposing strategic economic sanctions and halting diplomatic relationships that are fueling the regime's nuclear aspirations.

Drawing historical parallels: If Hitler had acquired nuclear weapons, would he have hesitated to use them?

So far, Iran is "pushing Biden around," as news analyst Aaron Cohen [said](#). The more Biden lets it, the more pushed around Biden will get.

It remains to be seen if the Biden administration will undergo a strategic recalibration and take decisive action, or persist in crafting a legacy that supports the Iranian regime, a top state sponsor of terrorism, to advance its nuclear weapon program to completion, and allows the ruling clerics and their allies, terror groups, and proxies, to acquire nuclear weapons.

The ramifications extend far beyond the immediate geopolitical landscape. America's actions now – or else its inaction – will determine the ability of global powers to mold an international order that either upholds democratic values or succumbs to the dominance of terror groups and dictatorships. Inaction or a failure to adopt a resolute stance against the ascent of Iran as a state sponsor of terrorism armed with nuclear capabilities, can only pave the way for a world where autocratic regimes and extremist factions dictate the course of international affairs.

Dr. Majid Rafizadeh is a business strategist and advisor, Harvard-educated scholar, political scientist, board member of Harvard International Review, and president of the International American Council on the Middle East. He has [authored](#) several books on Islam and US Foreign Policy. [The Dangerous Global Order with a Nuclear Armed Iran :: Gatestone Institute](#)