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READER EDITION

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ISRAEL BRIEF

Wednesday, November 26

Israel steps up its security apparatus, Hezbollah tries to save face, and Washington's 'day after' plans keep shrinking to fit the only truth left: nobody disarms Hamas but Israel.

◇ URIEL ZEHAVI

THE BOTTOM LINE This is what a real pro-Israel coalition looks like: embassies in Jerusalem instead of performative consulates in Tel Aviv, ICC pushback instead of high-minded shrugs, and billions of dollars of health-care partnerships instead of boycotts hidden behind “human rights” language. Israel’s job is to lock this camp in — deepen defense and intelligence work with Argentina and Hungary, use MedTech and other flagship sectors to anchor long-term strategic ties, and make it very clear inside the EU and UN that those who want credibility on antisemitism need to line up with the people actually defending Jewish life, not with the committees writing reports about it.

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EVERY front is moving again, even if the diplomats are still reading from last week's script. Rafah's tunnels are cracking, starving Hamas fighters keep surfacing east of the Yellow Line, and the IDF has stopped indulging the fantasy that this "phase" is anything but armed supervision. In the north, Hezbollah is still pretending its dignity survived Tabataba'i's death. Judea and Samaria is shifting from nightly raids toward something larger as PA police keep moonlighting as gunmen. Inside Israel, Likud's internal map just re-drew itself, Katz and Zamir are fighting over who controls the October 7 reckoning, and the cyber front is reminding everyone that the axis doesn't only fire rockets — it steals passwords, scrapes soldiers' Instagram feeds, and rides Chinese sensors into senior officers' driveways.

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Here's the day in one glance before we drill down.

Flash Brief

- **Rafah:** Six more Hamas terrorists surfaced from the tunnel grid and were killed; over 20 eliminated this week as the underground network collapses. *See The War Today.*
- **Kissufim:** A Hamas gunman used a jeep to attack along the humanitarian route and was dropped by Abu Nasira's anti-Hamas militia operating under the IDF umbrella. *See The War Today.*
- **Lebanon:** Hezbollah still hasn't answered for Tabataba'i; Israeli drones flew over his funeral while Iran pressures Beirut to retaliate without triggering war. *See Developments to Watch.*
- **Northern Samaria:** Three brigades, curfews, helicopters, and encirclement of the Tammun-Tubas belt as PA police join attacks and Iran pushes to build a battalion network. *See The War Today.*
- **Domestic front:** Likud's internal elections reshuffle power, Israel Katz freezes senior IDF promotions, and Zamir expands the purge of officers tied to October 7 failures. *See Inside Israel.*
- **Cyber:** "Shai-Hulud" compromised 25,000+ software projects; IDF deploys Morpheus to monitor soldiers' public social media; Chinese EVs recalled over espionage risk. *See Inside Israel.*
- **Diplomacy:** Argentina commits to opening its embassy in Jerusalem; Europe drifts toward boycotts; UN marking "solidarity" with Palestinians becomes a stage for Beijing. *See Israel and the World.*

GAZA is no longer a ceasefire zone; it's a cordon Israel polices with live ammunition and American coordination. Lebanon is trying to talk its way out of a corner it walked into. Iran pushes on every flank — lasers with Russia, IRGC into Yemen, incitement in Judea and Samaria — hoping Israel hesitates before the next decisive move. And at home, the system that failed two years ago is finally being forced to admit it.

The deeper sections ahead follow the same through-line: Israel is enforcing reality while its enemies — and too many foreign capitals — cling to theater.

The War Today

Gaza Enforcement Hardens as "Day After" Theater Unravels

In Gaza, Israel is already doing the job the "international community" still pretends an imaginary force will one day perform. Nahal, Golani and Yahalom keep tightening the noose in eastern Rafah: over the past week more than 20 terrorists have been killed and eight arrested as they try to escape their tunnel hideouts, five armed operatives were eliminated Tuesday, six more were hit from the air Wednesday after emerging from an underground

route, and Yellow Line enforcement remains absolute with multiple would-be attackers shot the moment they crossed into the IDF-controlled demarcation. A Hamas gunman who opened fire on a humanitarian route near Kissufim was dropped by the anti-Hamas militia led by Shawki Abu Nasira. At the same time, the coffin of murdered hostage Dror Or, ז"ל, finally crossed into Israel only after public pressure on Hamas and PIJ, with forensic teams confirming his identity. The IDF is still applying pressure, as Hamas continues to breach their terms of "phase one" of the ceasefire as two bodies are still held in Gaza.

While Israel dismantles the last serious Rafah pocket, Washington's ISF plan is stalling: key contributors like Azerbaijan have backed away, the U.N. resolution is already yellowing, and Danny Danon is telling the Security Council what everyone in Jerusalem already knows—that the PA can't disarm Hamas in Gaza when it can't even control terror in its own home base in Judea and Samaria. Into that vacuum, the U.S. is pushing "Alternative Safe Communities." These would be container-based compounds for 20–25k residents each on the IDF side of the Yellow Line, starting in Rafah, meant to house vetted Gazans, incentivize anti-Hamas clans, and quietly create a staging ground for those who want to leave the Strip.

On the ground, tents are flooding in Deir al-Balah and Khan Yunis—13,000 damaged by winter rain, cesspits overflowing—while displaced families rage at a Hamas leadership that blames only the "Israeli siege" and does nothing to fix sewage or shelter. COGAT's new vetted-trader aid mechanism, designed to keep Hamas away from supply chains, is being gamed inside Gaza: a tiny, opaque list of "approved" merchants sits atop a coordination-fee black market, turning truck allocations into mini-monopolies and sending prices through the roof while Hamas and its brokers skim at every point they can reach.

ASSESSMENT

Gaza's "phase two" now has two parallel realities. On one track, Israel is enforcing a brutal but precise security regime—killing tunnel fugitives, shooting every Yellow Line breach, recovering hostages' bodies and creating space for Gazans willing to break with Hamas. On the other, diplomats cling to an ISF that isn't forming, a PA that can't govern, and housing schemes that will help a few tens of thousands while two million people still live under a terror movement that spends more time screaming about "siege" than keeping their tents out of sewage. The direction is obvious: Israel is already disarming Hamas alone east of the Yellow Line and will eventually have to finish the job west of it, while any "Alternative Safe Community" that survives will be one more island of post-Hamas reality in a sea that the U.S. still insists on treating as negotiable.

Northern Samaria Becomes a Combat Zone, Not a Talking Point

In Judea and Samaria, Israel has stopped waiting for the next Jenin to appear and started pre-empting it. Overnight, the IDF, Shin Bet and Border Police launched another broad counterterrorism operation. This time in northern Samaria led by the Menashe, Samaria and Commando brigades, encircling the so-called "five villages" belt around Tubas, Tammun and Aqaba, imposing curfews, blocking roads with earth mounds, and using helicopters and

other assets to hit targets as forces move through. The trigger was months of intelligence showing attempts by Iranian-fed groups to build battalion-style infrastructures there since August, alongside a string of attacks on IDF forces; the stated goal is simple: stop those clusters from hardening into the kind of entrenched terror zones that existed until two years ago.

This follows the closing of two important circles: Ala Raouf Shetiyya, who rammed and killed two Kfir soldiers near Shechem in 2024, and Sultan al-Ghani, the hammer murderer of Gideon Perry, were both killed this week in targeted operations that also netted accomplices, rifles, explosives and other ordnance. While combat units dig out the networks, Central Command head Avi Bluth is locking in the long game. His November order formally defined jurisdiction zones for 13 communities in Binyamin, Samaria and the Jordan Valley—Ahiya, Harasha, Migron, Nofei Prat, Adei Ad, Shvut Rachel, Sa-Nur, Havat Yair, Tel Menashe, Maoz Tzvi, Givonit, Ir Hatamarim and Gadi—giving them clear municipal boundaries and paving the way for schools, infrastructure, new neighborhoods and full legalization. Regional leaders from Ganz and Dagan to Smotrich and Ohad Tal are calling it what it is: de facto sovereignty, a strategic reversal of the 2005 Sa-Nur evacuation, and the only durable answer to the terror wave that poured out of northern Samaria when those communities were erased.

ASSESSMENT

Northern Samaria is now treated as exactly what it is: an active combat theater and a strategic anchor, not a PR problem. The same command that is raiding villages, imposing curfews and killing marquee terrorists is also drawing hard borders around Jewish communities and telling everyone—from Tehran to Brussels—that these places are not going away. That combination—offensive operations to break up battalion-style cells, plus permanent Israeli jurisdiction on the ridge—is how you stop Iran’s Judea and Samaria project from becoming Gaza 2.0. The more the state backs settlers, farmers and towns with real security and real legal status, the less oxygen there is for terror infrastructures that grow in the gaps between maps and reality.

Inside Israel

Likud’s Map Shifts Under Netanyahu’s Feet

Likud’s first internal elections in nearly 14 years pulled 170,000 members into 85 branches and exposed the fault lines under Netanyahu’s party. In Jerusalem, Nir Barkat and Dudi Amsalem — historic enemies turned temporary partners — took roughly 60% and secured control of the capital branch and most of its Central Committee delegates, but Amit Halevi’s Liberal Likud slate still pulled ~40%, a serious showing for the younger, economically liberal faction backed by Dan Illouz, Shlomo Karhi, Eli Cohen and, quietly, the Netanyahu family. Eitan Shalom crushed Rishon Lezion with 86% under David Bitan’s patronage, Karhi’s bloc wiped the old guard in Bnei Brak, and Zohar, Ofir Katz, Ariel Kallner and others locked down Kiryat Gat, Afula and Haifa, while Israel Katz’s people took hits in Acre and Kfar Saba — not a great omen

for a man trying to hold onto the 50-member secretariat just as Zohar and Cohen circle his chair. These branch and Central Committee results are the draft order for the next three rounds: who runs the secretariat, who chairs the Central Committee, and ultimately who controls the primaries that decide Likud's Knesset slate and succession.

ASSESSMENT

Likud is reorganizing into three clear camps: the old machine (Katz, Bitan), the populist-national camp (Barkat, Amsalem and allies), and a growing Liberal Likud faction that talks free markets and classic right-wing governance instead of permanent emergency politics. Netanyahu still sits on top, but the ground under him is moving: if Katz loses the secretariat and Amsalem or a liberal replaces him, and if Halevi's crowd keeps converting 40% protest votes into real institutional power, the next primaries will be a knife fight not just over names but over what sort of Likud we will have dominating the center.

IDF Chief's Purge Slams Into Political Guardrails

The simmering fight between Defense Minister Israel Katz and IDF Chief of Staff Eyal Zamir went fully public this week and forced Netanyahu into referee mode. Katz froze all senior IDF promotions for 30 days and sent the Turgeman October 7 probe to the Defense Ministry comptroller for re-review, effectively putting the chief's house-cleaning on hold; Zamir, who had already fired the Gaza Division intel officer and begun pushing out other seniors, accused Katz of political interference that harms readiness and reminded everyone that the seven-month report was built by 12 generals to guide his command decisions, not to decorate press conferences. While Katz's camp insists the chief is working off "partial and insufficient information" and stresses that the IDF is subordinate to the elected echelon, Netanyahu's people quietly tell reporters he "made a mistake" appointing Zamir and complain the chief is "acting too independently" — even as Zamir runs the "Magen Oz" general-staff drill, pulling every major directorate and command into a war-readiness exercise aimed precisely at fixing October 7's failures.

In the background, military police trying to arrest a Haredi draft evader in Ramat Gan had their vehicle overturned by rioters, underlining how quickly any attempt to impose equal burden turns into confrontation while the political and military brass argue over accountability.

ASSESSMENT

This isn't a personality spat, it's the core governance question of the next decade: does the army get to launder its own failures and sprinkle "lessons learned" on them, or does a political echelon that also failed on October 7 insist on owning the accountability process and setting uniform standards for who pays? Katz is correct that the chief answers to civilians; Zamir is correct that real reform needs teeth, not legalistic foot-dragging, and he's at least acting like a man who believes the next war is not theoretical. If Netanyahu lets this devolve into a loyalty test instead of a hard reset of the civil-military relationship, Israel will enter the next Iran-Hezbollah round with a politicized General Staff and a defense minister more focused on politics than on fronts.

Knesset Gaza Theater Meets a Very Real Cyber War

Inside the Knesset, Yair Lapid has decided to weaponize Trump's Gaza plan against Netanyahu by forcing a vote of support: the opposition will back the 20-point framework "to strengthen the president's hand," knowing that section 19's "pathway to Palestinian self-determination and statehood" is poison to parts of the coalition (not to mention terrible politics) and will expose splits between Trump-loyal rhetoric and actual policy. The same plan's ISF and "Alternative Safe Communities" architecture is now being debated in New York, Brussels and Cairo even as Danon tells the Security Council the PA can't disarm Hamas and Jerusalem quietly prepares to do the heavy lifting alone.

Back home, the return and identification of murdered hostage body of Dror Or, ז"ל, after 781 days, and the knowledge that two bodies still remain in Gaza, keep the hostage issue welded to every discussion of leverage and "phase two." At the same time, the digital and tech front inside Israel is being treated less like IT and more like security doctrine.

A major cyberattack called "Shai-Hulud" just broke into more than 25,000 software projects, stealing programmers' passwords for GitHub, online tools, and cloud accounts — and when it couldn't steal anything, it even tried to erase people's computers. It's a blunt warning that hostile actors now treat Western and Israeli software systems as easy entry points into businesses, services, and even critical infrastructure. The IDF is rolling out "Morpheus," an AI system that will continuously scan 170,000 conscripts' public social media for photos, videos and posts that reveal bases, weapons, or movements, after discovering Hamas built a five-year intelligence project out of nothing more than soldiers' TikToks and making their way into closed WhatsApp groups. In parallel, the army has banned Chinese-made EVs from bases and is reportedly recalling hundreds of hybrid vehicles from senior officers, recognizing that a modern connected car is less "family ride" and more rolling sensor platform potentially feeding Beijing data on every colonel's commute.

ASSESSMENT

The domestic fight over Gaza's "day after" and Trump's plan is not happening in a vacuum. Lapid's move will annoy Netanyahu but it also forces the coalition to say out loud what it actually thinks about statehood language it has been politely swallowing for Washington's sake. Meanwhile, the Shai-Hulud breach, Morpheus rollout and Chinese car recall show a system that has started to treat the digital and commercial surface of Israeli life as contested terrain. That's the right instinct: you can't fight Iran, Hamas and their friends abroad while leaving your developers' laptops, your soldiers' Instagram, and your officers' "spy cars" wide open at home.

Israel and the World

European Institutions Drift Further Against Israel and Local Jews

A major Finnish retail group, S Group, announced it will stop buying Israeli products, citing “genocide” rhetoric and EU/UN pressure, while happily keeping the door open to reverse the decision if Israel’s “human rights” situation improves — as if the Jewish state were a misbehaving supplier, not a besieged ally. In Britain, West Midlands Police doubled down in a letter to MPs on wildly inflated claims about “500–600” violent Maccabi Tel Aviv fans in Amsterdam, figures the Dutch police have already said are “not true,” prompting cross-party calls for full disclosure of whatever “intelligence” was used to ban Jewish fans from Villa Park; at the same time, a Jewish mother in Hertfordshire was wrongly arrested over emails to her child’s school about Holocaust education and removal from Christian prayer, then questioned about her faith as if Judaism itself were suspicious. Over at the BBC, the author of the internal memo that toppled the head of BBC News told MPs that BBC Arabic’s problems with bias toward Israel and Jews are “systemic,” not fixable by swapping a few editors, while board members admit they’ve been firefighting breaches piecemeal instead of addressing the culture.

ASSESSMENT

Europe’s formal stance is still “never again,” but on the ground you can see what “again” looks like in slow motion: supermarkets boycotting Israeli goods, police forces willing to exclude Jewish fans on the basis of dodgy intel and politics, national broadcasters running an Arabic arm that needs two apologies a week for guideline breaches on this conflict. The only upside is that these pathologies are now being dragged into parliaments and select committees instead of staying buried in inboxes. Israel and diaspora leadership need to treat this not as a string of PR incidents but as a strategic front: push for hard inquiries, force corrections into policy, and stop pretending that institutions that mistreat Jews at home will suddenly behave responsibly when they sit in judgment over Israel.

From Buenos Aires to Budapest, Israel’s Partners Step Up

While Western Europe performs concern, other capitals are moving. In Buenos Aires, Argentine President Javier Milei told Foreign Minister Gideon Sa’ar he plans to open an Argentine embassy in Jerusalem on his next visit, praying with a kippah in his palace office, showing Sa’ar his mezuzah and explicitly tying the move to shared battles against Iran and Hezbollah — the same network that bombed the Israeli embassy and AMIA center in the 1990s. In Hungary, EU affairs minister and antisemitism commissioner János Bóka is pitching Budapest as a model for Europe: a government that has “expelled political antisemitism” from mainstream politics, openly backs Israel in EU forums (including preparing to leave the ICC over its treatment of Jerusalem) and insists you cannot fight Jew-hatred at home while sanctioning Israel in Brussels. On the economic flank, 37 Israeli MedTech companies drew record attention at MEDICA 2025 in Düsseldorf: hospital chains, governments and insurers are lining up for Israeli imaging, AI diagnostics, remote monitoring, and infection-control tech, turning post-war sympathy and hard-earned battlefield experience into concrete deals and pilot programs across Europe, North America and Asia.

ASSESSMENT

This is what a real pro-Israel coalition looks like: embassies in Jerusalem instead of performative consulates in Tel Aviv, ICC pushback instead of high-minded shrugs, and billions of dollars of health-care partnerships instead of boycotts hidden behind “human rights” language. Israel’s job is to lock this camp in — deepen defense and intelligence work with Argentina and Hungary, use MedTech and other flagship sectors to anchor long-term strategic ties, and make it very clear inside the EU and UN that those who want credibility on antisemitism need to line up with the people actually defending Jewish life, not with the committees writing reports about it.

Briefly Noted

Culture, Religion & Society

- The head of American Muslims for Palestine made derogatory remarks about Holocaust institutions, accused certain groups of “monopolizing victimhood,” and urged backing for alternate museums. According to the Jerusalem Post, this nonprofit faces investigation for alleged ties to designated terror groups while maintaining tax-exempt status.
- According to WLNS, residents in Howell, Michigan discovered white supremacist recruitment materials in public spaces with extremist symbols and communication links. This tactic reflects nationwide patterns of micro-cell organizations testing community response.
- The U.S. Senate unanimously passed legislation to identify WWII military personnel interred with incorrect religious markers and correct their grave designations over ten years, ensuring proper commemoration. Per JNS, this represents bipartisan recognition of historical injustice.
- A column in JNS argues that opposition campaigns focus on Jewish political organization rather than on foreign influence more broadly, noting selective criticism of certain advocacy while ignoring comparable efforts by other nations and groups.

Diplomacy & Geopolitics

- Venezuela’s foreign minister responded to criticism from Gideon Sa’ar by making inflammatory accusations, according to Jewish Insider. The exchange highlights how state actors weaponize rhetoric against Israel.
- Syrian security forces dispersed rival demonstrations in the Alawite region using live fire as communities seek autonomy and prisoner releases under new authorities, per Algemeiner. Sectarian fracturing mirrors earlier civil conflict patterns.
- According to JNS analysis, U.S. efforts to designate certain organizations as terrorist entities may be complicated by simultaneous diplomatic engagement with their primary financial backer in the Gulf region.

Domestic & Law

- Israel National News reports the Knesset advanced legislation repealing restrictions on property ownership, while the Defense Ministry pursues

parallel administrative action. The measure addresses colonial-era limitations on Jewish land acquisition.

Frontline & Security

- A Regavim survey documented over 103,000 unlicensed structures in a territorial zone, including educational institutions and manufacturing facilities, financed through external sources. JNS notes this represents systematic ground-level state formation despite diplomatic frameworks.

Developments to Watch

Northern Front (Lebanon / Syria)

- **Hezbollah's Clock Ticks Down** — Intelligence from Beirut indicates Iranian pressure on the militant group for retaliation while media discuss various options. The passage of time without major action increases humiliation and raises odds of symbolic strikes overseas or miscalculated local volleys. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**
- **Alawite Protests Spread Under Gunfire** — Large demonstrations in multiple Syrian cities drew live rounds from new authorities after protesters demanded autonomy and safety. Sectarian turbulence near the Golan means regional players will exploit instability while Israel maintains alert status. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**
- **Unconfirmed Jet Activity Near Iran** — Regional media reported unidentified low-altitude aircraft near the Iran–Iraq border; neither the U.S. nor Israel confirmed involvement. Whether Israeli or American, Tehran signals concern through leaks. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**

Gaza & Southern Theater

- **Rafah Tunnel Breakouts Continue** — Six additional combatants exited underground passages and were killed; weekly tally exceeds twenty with dozens trapped below. Starvation-driven escapes mean the ceasefire's static perimeter dissolves; Israel must expand clearance scope westward.
- **Militia Enforcement Becomes Structural** — The Abu Nasira militia again neutralized a hostile actor near a humanitarian crossing after he opened fire. Parallel armed structures form de facto buffering inside the controlled line — early signs of local order structures.
- **Egypt Freezes Reconstruction Track** — Cairo postponed its reconstruction initiative citing instability and uncertainty about planned structures. When neighboring states hesitate to advance processes, diplomatic façades deteriorate.

Judea & Samaria

- **Northern Samaria Operation Expands** — The military encircled a cluster of communities with multiple brigades, aircraft, movement restrictions

and search operations. This represents prevention rather than response to Iranian-backed network formation. **LIKELY TO ESCALATE**

- **Haredi Draft Flashpoint Turns Violent** — Haredi populations overturned a security vehicle during an enforcement action in a suburban area. Additional confrontations anticipated as court-imposed deadlines approach and enforcement becomes inescapable.

Regional Axis (Iran, Houthis, Militias)

- **Houthis Face Internal Challenge** — Anti-Houthi Yemeni factions signal openness to multilateral security arrangements in exchange for foreign backing against the group. If substantive, this undermines Iran's southern apparatus and strengthens Washington's leverage, though Tehran will contest vigorously.
- **White Phosphorus Blood Libel Resurfaces** — Lebanese outlets circulated unsubstantiated claims regarding munition use near specific locations despite absent evidence. The militant group shapes narrative cover justifying forward action by pre-accusing Israel of violations.

Diplomatic & Legal

- **Lapid Forces a Trump-Plan Vote** — The opposition leader will bring the administration's proposal to parliament, pressuring the governing coalition to accept or reject it publicly. The vote creates choice between Washington perception and coalition stability.
- **UN Solidarity Day Becomes a Stage** — Beijing praised the international marking of solidarity with Palestinians, establishing foothold in narrative warfare.

Home Front & Politics

- **Morpheus Surveillance Goes Live** — The military activated AI monitoring of 170,000 conscripts' public social feeds for operational intelligence leaks after discovering a five-year adversary OSINT campaign. This structures institutional response to Hamas's social-media intelligence program and initiates privacy debates.
- **Likud's Map Shifts After Internal Vote** — With substantial turnout, party branch elections reset factional distributions, weakening one camp while strengthening others. The following ninety days determine Netanyahu's maneuverability toward elections.

If today has a theme, it's that the last illusions are wearing out. Hamas wants the ceasefire to be a shield, but starving tunnel fighters aren't props — they're the remains of a military structure Israel is dismantling shard by shard. Hezbollah wants to look poised, but any real retaliation risks a short, heavy Israeli air war it cannot survive. Iran wants to stretch time, but the corridor through Syria, Yemen and Lebanon is fraying under pressure. Inside Israel, the pre-war evasions — about service, about accountability, about who runs this country in a crisis — are no longer sustainable.

The next inflection points are already visible: whether Hezbollah keeps absorbing humiliation or makes the mistake that forces Israel to finish the northern front; whether Hamas's collapse east of the Yellow Line pulls the west in with it; and whether Israel's leadership locks in this enforcement posture or slips back into the habits that detonated on October 7.

The side that accepts reality wins. The side that pretends otherwise gets surprised.

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Mitzpe Institute is an intelligence and strategy organization focused on Israeli security, diaspora threat assessment, and the strategic challenges confronting the Jewish people and the West. We produce daily intelligence, forensic analyses, strategic assessments, and tactical briefings read by policymakers, military leaders, and institutional decision-makers across more than 90 countries and all 50 US states — from the Knesset and the US Congress to allied governments, major policy institutions, and Jewish organizational leadership worldwide.

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