

ISRAEL REPORT

To provide greater exposure to primary Israeli news sources and opinions in order to become better informed on the issues, and to gain a better understanding of the wide range of perspectives that exist in Israeli society and politics.

Issue 1107 • May 25, 2018 • 12 Sivan 5778

INTEL MIN. SAYS US MAY SOON RECOGNIZE ISRAEL'S HOLD ON GOLAN (YNet 5/23/18)

Israel is pressing the Trump administration to recognize its sovereignty over the Golan Heights, Intelligence Minister Israel Katz said on Wednesday, predicting US assent could come within months.

Interviewed by Reuters, Katz described endorsement of Israel's 51-year-old hold on the Golan as the proposal now "topping the agenda" in bilateral diplomatic talks with the United States.

Any such move would be seen as a follow-up on the US exit from the international nuclear deal with Iran, and President Donald Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and the opening of a new US embassy there this month.

The Golan Heights form a strategic plateau between Israel and Syria of about 1,200 square kilometers (460 square miles). It was part of Syria until Israel captured it in the 1967 Six-Day War. After moving Israelis into the area, Israel annexed the territory in 1981 in a move not recognized internationally.

Once willing to consider returning the Golan for peace with Syria, the Israelis have in recent years argued that the civil war in Syria and the presence there of an Iranian garrison show they need to keep the strategic plateau.

In June 2017, Netanyahu stated that the "Golan Heights will always remain under Israeli sovereignty. We will never leave the Golan Heights. It is ours." Katz, a member of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's security cabinet, cast the Golan proposal as a potential extension of the Trump administration's confrontational tack against perceived regional expansion and aggression by Iran, Israel's arch-enemy.

"This is the perfect time to make such a move. The most painful response you can give the Iranians is to recognize Israel's Golan sovereignty—with an American statement, a presidential proclamation, enshrined (in law)," he said. The message to Tehran, Katz said, would be: "You want to destroy (US-ally Israel), to generate attacks (against it)? Look, you got exactly the opposite." The matter, raised by Netanyahu in his first White House meeting with President Donald Trump in February 2017, is now under discussion at various levels of the US administration and Congress, Katz said. "I reckon there is a high probability this will happen," he said. Asked if such a decision could be made this year, he added: "Yes, give or take a few months."

ISRAEL SAID TO CONSIDER LONG-TERM CEASE FIRE WITH HAMAS (Times of Israel 5/23/18)

Israel is considering agreeing to a long-term cessation of hostilities with Hamas after rejecting the offer for weeks, Channel 10 news reported Wednesday. Diplomatic officials told the TV channel that Israel has given up on its demand that Hamas, the terror group ruling the Gaza Strip, demilitarize and that the Palestinian Authority replace it in governing the coastal enclave. Israeli officials were said to have recognized that with PA President Mahmoud Abbas's health deteriorating, the likelihood that his Ramallah-based government will regain control of Gaza is slim.

Egyptian and Qatari officials are each proposing and mediating their suggestions for an agreement that would see Israel significantly ease its blockade of Gaza in exchange for the complete cessation of rocket fire and of the digging by terror groups of cross-border tunnels used to carry out attacks in Israeli territory. Hamas would also have to agree to not use materials allowed into Gaza under the loosened restrictions for its military apparatus. As part of the reported deal, the Egyptians would ease constraints at the Rafah border crossing with Gaza, the report said.

A senior White House official told Channel 10 that Hamas, which seeks to destroy Israel, presents a "challenge."

"None of our partners has a plan that it is clear will work, but we are trying," the official was quoted as saying, and noting that the US is pressuring Middle Eastern nations to publicly declare that Hamas is responsible for the escalation in the Gaza Strip.

ISRAEL LAUNCHED WORLD'S FIRST AIR STRIKE USING F-35 STEALTH FIGHTERS, AIR FORCE CHIEF SAYS (Ha'aretz 5/23/18)

Israel is the first country in the world to carry out an "operational attack" with the F-35 stealth fighter, Israel Air Force commander Maj. Gen. Amikam Norkin said on Tuesday. "I think that we are the first to attack with the F-35 in the Middle East," Norkin said. The air force chief was speaking about the Middle East, but this is the first known operational use of the new fifth-generation fighter jet in the world. Norkin presented images of the F-35 over Beirut, Lebanon, and said that the stealth fighter did not participate in the most recent strike in Syria but did in two previous ones.

He was speaking at a three-day conference organized by the IAF in Herzliya, to which senior officers from armies all over the world were invited. The IAF commander also said that Iran fired 32 rockets at Israel during the flare-up across the Syrian border earlier this month.

According to him, four rockets were intercepted by Israel and the rest landed outside of Israeli territory, and more than 100 surface-to-air missiles were fired at Israeli jets over Syria. "After that [the Iranian attack] we attacked over 20 Iranian targets in Syria. Unfortunately, Syrian air defense systems fired over 100 anti-aircraft missiles at our planes and in response we destroyed their anti-aircraft batteries," Norkin said.

A senior IAF officer confirmed that the Israel Defense Forces has continued

Israel Report is a Student Publication of

Torah Academy of Bergen County

Alex Ostrin, Yoav Zolty, Editors-in-Chief

Akiva Sturm, Eli Jarashow, Ezra Sepowitz and Bentzion Rotblat, Editors

We are proud to be distributed by these institutions, though they do not necessarily support or condone any of the material published:

| | |
|---|--|
| Anshei Chesed Cong., Boynton Beach, FL | Hillel at Brandeis University |
| Bergen County High School of Jewish Studies | Hillel at California State University - Long Beach |
| Boca Raton Synagogue, FL | Hillel at Columbia University |
| Carmel School, Hong Kong | Hillel at Johns Hopkins University |
| Cong. Agudath Achim, Bradley Beach, NJ | Hillel at Yale University |
| Cong. Ahavas Achim, Highland Park, NJ | Hillel High School, Deal NJ |
| Cong. Ahavath Achim, Fairfield, CT | Jewish Center of Teaneck, NJ |
| Cong. Anshe Shalom, Jamaica Estates, NY | Kehillas Bais Yehudah Tzvi, Cedarhurst, NY |
| Cong. Anshe Shalom, New Rochelle, NY | Kemp Mill Synagogue, Silver Spring, MD |
| Cong. Beth Aaron, Teaneck, NJ | Mizrachi Shul, Johannesburg, SA |
| Cong. Beth Shalom, Monroe Twp, NJ | North Shore Hebrew Academy HS, NY |
| Cong. Bnai Yeshurun, Teaneck, NJ | Suburban Torah Center, Livingston, NJ |
| Cong. Etz Ahaim, Highland Park, NJ | The Learning Shul, Columbia, SC |
| Cong. Ohr Torah, Edison, NJ | Woodsburgh, NY Minyan |
| Cong. Rinat Yisrael, Teaneck, NJ | Young Israel Bet Tefilah of Aberdeen, NJ |
| Cong. Shomrei Torah, Fair Lawn, NJ | Young Israel of Brookline, MA |
| Cong. Sons of Israel, Allentown, PA | Young Israel of East Brunswick, NJ |
| Cong. Zichron Mordechai, Teaneck, NJ | Young Israel of Fort Lee, NJ |
| Cong. Zichron R. M. Feinstein, Brooklyn, NY | Young Israel of Hancock Park, CA |
| Delray Orthodox Synagogue, Delray Beach, FL | Young Israel of Holliswood, NY |
| East Denver Orthodox Synagogue, CO | Young Israel of Houston, TX |
| Flatbush Park Jewish Center, Mill Basin, NY | Young Israel of New Hyde Park, NY |
| Harvard University Library | Young Israel of North Woodmere, NY |
| Hebrew Academy of Long Beach, NY | Young Israel of New Rochelle, NY |
| Hillel at Baruch College | Young Israel of Sharon, MA |
| YI Shomrai Eemunah, Silver Spring, MD | |

We encourage our readers to subscribe to our sources on the internet. For more information or to subscribe by e-mail, reach us at IsraelReport@tabc.org



to operate against Iranian forces in Syria since the attack on Israel, which took place overnight between May 9 and 10. "It is possible to assume that actions have been taken since the recent events," he explained. "We are continuing to maintain our freedom of action in the region.

We are acting to disrupt and prevent [possible attacks] while keeping the situation below the threshold of war. We are continuing with our operational mission against the arming of Hezbollah and Iranian moves to establish themselves in Syria. As far as we are concerned, anywhere we identify consolidation [of Iranian forces] or the introduction of weapons, we act," the officer added.

"Our success is any move that serves the goals of the government leadership, this is our mission." IAF chief Norkin outlined the reasons behind Israel's growing anxiety over Iranian activities in Syria. "The Quds Force established itself at T-4 base, 250 kilometers from Israel. From this base they tried to attack using a drone that entered into Israel, a few months ago. After this incident we realized that they were continuing to store weapons on this base, including air defense capabilities, which we attacked last month," he explained at the conference.

"Over the past few weeks we learned that Iran had sent long-range missiles and rockets to Syria, including the Uragan launchers that we attacked north of Damascus," added Norkin.

IDF ATTACKS HAMAS TUNNEL, NAVAL TARGETS (YNet 5/23/18)

The IDF attacked a Hamas terror tunnel in the northern Gaza Strip with fighter jets early Wednesday. Two additional targets of the Gaza-ruling terror group's naval force were hit.

The IDF Spokesperson's Unit said that strike came in response to the infiltration of Palestinians from the strip into Israel Tuesday, as well as in light of "continued attempts to insert drones and kites into Israel for the purposes of terrorism and arson."

As a result of the strike, Palestinian sources reported, a boat set to participate in a protest flotilla calling to break the naval blockade on Gaza caught fire.

A statement by the spokesperson's unit said that the army "views gravely continued daily attempts by the Hamas terror group to damage security infrastructures on Israeli territory, while threatening the security of both residents and soldiers, and is determined to realize its defensive tasks and ensure the safety of the people of Israel."

The statement further reiterated the IDF's oft-stated stance that Hamas was "exclusively responsible for the goings-on in Gaza both above and below ground, and will face the consequences of the terrorist activities carried out from Gaza against Israel's people and its sovereignty."

Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman tweeted about the strike, saying, "The IDF destroyed another tunnel belonging to the Hamas terror group tonight. Attempts to assail Israel from the air, through the fence and below-ground will be met with an iron wall and the IDF's might."

"It's good for the heads of Hamas to internalize that their military project is a failure and invest all of their efforts in improving the life of Gazans (instead)," the defense minister added.

Several Palestinian terrorists crossed the border Tuesday morning, getting several dozen meters into Israel, and set fire to an abandoned IDF post before returning to the strip. The entire incident was documented by the terrorists themselves.

IDF tanks fired at a Hamas post in the vicinity in retaliation.

Terrorists stole into Israel, set fire to an abandoned IDF post and planted a Palestinian flag nearby

The video published by the Palestinians showed the terrorists attempting to set fire to several sandbags and camouflage nets used by Israeli snipers during the weekly border protests near the fence.

The IDF noted that the Palestinians infiltrating Israel were under surveillance the entire time and that the incident will be investigated.

AMID RISING TENSION WITH TURKEY, KNESSET TO DEBATE RECOGNIZING ARMENIAN GENOCIDE (Israel Hayom 5/23/18)

As tension between Israel and Turkey continues to rise, the Knesset plenum was scheduled to debate on Wednesday a private member's bill from Meretz Chairwoman Tamar Zandberg proposing that Israel recognize the genocide Turkey perpetrated against the Armenian people a century ago.

"This is a matter of morality, not a passing political act," Zandberg said.

Starting in 1915, the Turks implemented an ethnic cleansing policy against Armenians, most of whom were living in the Ottoman Empire. Armenian communities were forced to evacuate and were marched toward Syria. As many as 1.5 million Armenians are estimated to have been killed.

Zandberg said it was "unacceptable" for Israel not to recognize the Armenian genocide, regardless of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's conduct.

"For years, Israel has avoided recognizing the genocide of the Armenian people, one of the most horrible acts of killing of the 20th century. The failure to recognize it is a moral stain on Israel, and on every country that opted, in its own interests, to ignore a disaster that befell others," Zandberg added.

The government has opposed previous bills from Meretz MKs calling for Israel to recognize the Armenian genocide. However, a number of coalition MKs have announced that in light of growing tension between Israel and Turkey and Erdogan's attacks on Israel over its response to border riots last week that killed over 60 Hamas terrorists and Palestinian civilians, they intend to support Zandberg's bill.

Meanwhile, Erdogan continued to double down against Israel, saying on Tuesday that Turkey would consider canceling trade relations with Israel following next month's presidential election.

Erdogan was referring to a boycott on Israeli-manufactured goods organized by the Organization for Islamic Cooperation. If the Turkish leader follows through on his threats, it will be one step closer to cutting ties entirely.

Nevertheless, Erdogan's remarks are not causing undue distress in Israel.

Economy and Industry Minister Eli Cohen told Israel Hayom on Tuesday that the "limping" Turkish economy, not Israel, would pay the price for cutting off bilateral economic relations.

Turkey imports \$1.43 billion worth of goods per year, Cohen said.

"Even before the [latest] threat, given recent statements [from Erdogan], I issued instructions to cancel a planned conference on trade with Turkey that was scheduled to take place in Tel Aviv at the end of the month," Cohen said.

PARAGUAY OFFICIALLY MOVES EMBASSY TO JERUSALEM: 'WE HAVE NO BETTER FRIEND' (Ha'aretz 5/21/18)

Paraguay officially moved its country's embassy to Jerusalem on Monday, with President Horacio Cartes in Israel for the ceremony, also attended by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Paraguay is now the third country to move its embassy to Jerusalem, following the United States and Guatemala. The inauguration ceremony took place at noon at the embassy's new home in the Malkha technology park, which also houses the Guatemalan embassy.

On Monday evening, a reception will be held at the Foreign Ministry. Netanyahu gave a speech at the ceremony in which he emphasized that both countries "have great cooperation and it will be even better."

"Paraguay supported the creation of the State of Israel in the United Nations. We will never forget that. Paraguay, before but especially under your leadership, took a very bold stance in international affairs and refused to cooperate with the lies directed against Israel. And because of this, you have not only the support of our government but the profound gratitude of the people of Israel. We remember our friends. We have no better friends than you," Netanyahu said.

ISRAEL'S SPY CHIEF: IT IS A GREAT PLEASURE TO STEAL FROM THE PERSIANS (Israel Hayom 5/21/18)

Mossad Director Yossi Cohen made an unusual comment on Saturday, all

but conceding that his agency was responsible for the recent daring raid on Iran's nuclear archive.

Speaking at an event marking the holiday of Shavuot, Cohen said, "It is a great pleasure to steal from Persians," Israeli broadcaster Kan reported.

Cohen was referring to the televised revelation by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on April 30 that Israeli intelligence had obtained a large trove of documents – amounting to 55,000 printed pages and 183 compact disks of data – detailing Iran's nuclearization efforts over the years.

In his presentation, Netanyahu made the case that the 2015 Iran nuclear deal was based on Iranian lies because the documents showed Iran had never actually abandoned its efforts to seek a nuclear bomb and had kept its archive to maintain its expertise and capabilities.

According to The New York Times, the operation was carried out by the Mossad in January, about two years after the agency discovered that the archive was stored in a small, nondescript warehouse outside Tehran.

At the Shavuot event, Cohen said that after the revelation of the operation, he was approached by his counterparts in other spy agencies who said they were willing to help Israel. "I told them that they could help Israel by voting for Israel in Eurovision," Cohen quipped, referring to the international song contest won by Israel last week.

RENAULT-NISSAN-MITSUBISHI SEES ISRAELI TECH AS KEY TO FUTURE OF CARS (Times of Israel 5/23/18)

Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi investment arm Alliance Ventures has decided to invest an undisclosed amount of money in an Israeli VC fund focusing on car technologies, Maniv Mobility, marking Alliance's first investment in Israel and bringing the total of its funds invested globally to \$50 million.

Alliance Ventures, a corporate venture capital fund, was set up by Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi, one of the world's leading automotive alliances, in January, with the aim of investing up to \$1 billion to support startups and partnerships focused on auto technologies around the world including Israel.

The aim is to tap into the most promising automotive-technology startups, the automakers said. Maniv Mobility last year raised \$40 million for its first fund. The Alliance Ventures fund expects to invest up to \$200 million in startups in each of the five years, and set up partnerships with technology entrepreneurs focused on areas such as electric and autonomous vehicles, connectivity and artificial intelligence.

"We have committed to invest in Maniv," but the deal has not yet been finalized, said Matthieu De Chanville, the deputy head of Alliance Ventures in an interview with The Times of Israel, on the sidelines of the EcoMotion a smart transportation exhibition in Tel Aviv, at which dozens of startups and industry leaders on Wednesday presented their wares and showcased their contributions to the changing world of mobility and transportation.

The investment in Maniv will also expose the Alliance to seed stage firms, as the Alliance typically tends to focus on startups that have already raised their first and second rounds (series A and B) of funding, he said. Since its inception, the fund will have invested some \$50 million in startups globally this year, including the amount in Maniv, if it is finalized.

How much it will invest in Israel "will depend on the opportunities that arise," he said. "In our industry, of autonomous technologies and mobility services, Israel is the third most important place after the US and China, for technologies to build the car of the future," he said. "We have to be here."

MAKING FRIENDS WHILE RACING WITH 'THE OTHER' IN JERUSALEM (Israel21c 5/17/18)

Philip, like many of the teens involved in Arab and Jewish Jerusalem running group Runners Without Borders, doesn't know enough Arabic to converse with his counterparts from Arab neighborhoods. But as a recent Russian immigrant, he barely speaks Hebrew either.

While running through Jerusalem's Liberty Bell and Mesila parks for training once a week, Philip nevertheless has made friends.

"He found common ground with both sides, communicating with signals and a few words as they run together," says Israel Haas, cofounder of RWB, which encourages Jewish and Arab residents of the city to meet, interact and cooperate through athletics.

RWB was formed in November 2014 in response to a tense year punctuated by racial violence and war. Haas was organizing a mixed boys running group and Shoshana Ben-David was separately organizing a mixed girls running group.

"We did not know each other and we were connected by some friends," Haas explains. "We decided to join forces and establish an NGO." They engaged a Jewish coordinator and an Arab coordinator in addition to professional running coaches.

From the very beginning, Haas felt that typical Arab-Jewish coexistence efforts based on the Western emphasis on dialogue don't take into account the Middle Eastern mindset and are therefore of limited value.

"When you want to bridge between two sides you can't use the tools of one side and not the other. That's why Shoshana and I chose sports, and specifically running, because we both are runners and we know it's a very easy platform. In football or basketball you need to communicate in a common language but in running you just run together and everybody is equal."

Since participants are a self-selecting group eager to interact, Haas has not witnessed any problems between the two populations, many of whom live on the remote edges of the city in low socioeconomic conditions.

"We try to avoid politics as much as we can. The message we try to convey is one of just wanting to break down the barriers and let people get to know each other," says Haas.

Some RWB runners feel this is best accomplished by learning one another's language.

"Walid from the Arab neighborhood of Ras el-Amud joined us at age 15 and started learning Hebrew seriously and practiced by conversing while training. Now, at 18, he speaks Hebrew very well and insists on talking on the phone in Hebrew with Jewish participants and the Jewish coordinator," says Haas. "And he's not the only one. We also see Jewish participants taking Arabic courses."

Every November, RWB stages a race open for the general public. "Last time we had 750 participants and we're hoping for 1,000 in 2018," says Haas.

One testament to its positive impact is that school principals from the Arab neighborhoods of eastern Jerusalem refer adolescents to the group.

However, a challenge remains in overcoming some Palestinian leaders' desire to avoid "normalization" with Jewish Israelis. While Arab and Jewish RWB runners have participated every March for four years in the Jerusalem Marathon, only Arab runners have been allowed to register for the Bethlehem Marathon later the same month. Haas is optimistic that this policy will change.

"We just want to create a common zone where Jews and Arabs can get to know each other. If you know each other, you won't do bad things to each other," concludes Haas.

WHY ISRAEL SHOULD RECOGNIZE AND CHERISH EVANGELICAL SUPPORT (Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, YNet 5/22/18)

The US Embassy move from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and the White House's official recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital is an impressive diplomatic achievement of the Netanyahu government, and influential Jewish groups likely contributed to the move too.

But there is another group whose contribution to this move should be recognized and cherished. In fact, it likely wouldn't have happened without that group—America's evangelical Christian community.

This community, and its influence on the embassy move, have been subject to implicit criticism from Yael Patir, J Street's Israel director. So a few things should be made clear.

The evangelical Christians' firm support for Israel guarantees, more than anything else, the advancement and protection of Israel's interests in the world power, and therefore in the United Nations and in many other places in the world as well.

Today, this support is perceived as obvious, but it definitely should be taken for granted. In the past four decades, I have had the privilege of being one of the main activists working to build bridges of trust and cooperation between the Christian public and leadership, the Jewish people and the State of Israel. In the late 1970s, only few Jews were familiar with this community, and most of them were suspicious of it or disregarded it. On the Christian side, Israel and the Jewish people weren't considered a top priority either. President Jimmy Carter, for example, was an evangelical Christian whose views weren't pro-Israel.

The Christian support for Israel today is the result of decades of PR efforts and education to connect the evangelical community to Christianity's Jewish roots. In the beginning, I had no idea how much this community would grow in numbers and influence. We worked to enlist the Christian leadership to politically support and pro-Israel lobbying, and we later worked to encourage Christian tourism to Israel, which today makes up almost half of incoming tourism to the country.

Starting from the 1990s, upon the fall of the Soviet regime and the beginning of the wave of immigration from Russia to Israel, millions of Christians answered the call of the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, which was published in leading evangelical media outlets and began enlisting in droves, offering financial donations to help the immigration to Israel, contributing to the welfare of the state's weakened citizens and strengthening the civil defense system at times of emergency.

About a million and a half Israelis and Jews in the Diaspora receive critical aid from the Fellowship every year in the areas of welfare, medicine and more. These projects, which cost billions of shekels, couldn't have existed with the help of millions of Christian donors around the world. These are usually simple people who give from the little they have, believing they should support Israel and the Jewish people.

I'm mentioning all this to demonstrate those Christians' huge contribution to Israel, which isn't duly appreciated. The evangelical public is a strategic asset to Israel on the diplomatic and social level.

We must remember that the support Israel enjoys today is just the tip of the iceberg, and we must keep reaching out and enlisting more and more communities. Beyond the US, the evangelical Christians are among the fastest-growing religious communities in the world, with some 100,000 believers in China and hundreds of millions in Latin America and Korea.

The common denominator between the countries that are following in America's footsteps, and are expected to move their embassies to Jerusalem too, is their affiliation with evangelical Christianity. Guatemalan President Jimmy Morales is a devout evangelical Christian and his voters support Israel for the same reason. In Honduras, which also declared its intention to move its embassy, the evangelical community makes up 40% of the population.

But just like the evangelical support didn't come out of nowhere, its continuation isn't guaranteed either. If we want this alliance to be maintained and grow stronger in the future, we must treat it with respect and invest in it. It's time to learn, understand and recognize a contribution that benefits Israel, understand its importance and motives and work to boost it in every way. We should simply recognize the good and say thank you.

'START-UP NATION' OR SHTETL (Philippe Weil and Eyal Winter, JPost 5/23/18)

A recent report on the state of economics education in Israel commissioned by the Council of Higher Education has sounded a code-red alarm: the ability of the country to train world-class economists is collapsing. Pockets of excellence survive here and there in the large research universities, but the writing is on the wall.

The marvelously creative community of top-notch research economists this country fostered in the past has, by and large, been disbanded – to other professions or to foreign countries. Hebrew University and Tel Aviv University were ranked 32 and 20 (respectively) among economics departments worldwide in 1990-1994 but have now fallen to places 78 and 73. Other departments in Israel struggle to make it into the top 200. What happened? Money is an easy suspect. The demise of top-notch economics research in Israel and precipitous fall of the best Israeli departments in international rankings follows the explosion of salaries in US economics departments, so a shoot-from-the-hip explanation assigns the travails of Israeli economics to the inability of the country (with its heavy defense burden and fast-growing population) to offer its academic economists salaries commensurate with those in the US. "Cry, the beloved country, we are doomed by the lack of money, there is nothing we can do" – this is the heartbreaking explanation emanating from the hallways of academia and the corridors of power.

This diagnosis, which focuses exclusively on money that is unlikely to ever be found, is responsible for a pernicious paralysis that has brought Israeli higher education in economics to the cusp of final collapse. Clearly, extra money would help, but money alone will not solve the problem and a substantial improvement can be accomplished without it. Instead of mourning that Israeli economic departments are shorter in resources than top US ones, it is necessary to act now: to rejoin the race for global excellence, top Israeli economics departments must internationalize.

The most striking difference between the top Israeli economics departments and their successful counterparts abroad is not buildings or the quality of faculty. It is the almost total lack of international faculty or students. The top departments seem mired in a parochial time-warp where students and faculty are almost exclusively Israeli, whereas top PhD programs everywhere have opened their doors wide to recruit the best doctoral candidates and faculty worldwide without regard for their nationality or their intentions to remain in the country in the long run.

This model – excellence and internationalization at home – has been adopted with spectacular success by many education systems in Europe (prominently the UK), which have managed to rescue themselves from the very oblivion threatening top Israeli economics departments. It does require, of course, an immediate switch to English of the whole ecosystem of economics graduate education in research universities: courses, course materials, departmental web sites, faculty meetings, administration, etc.

To be implemented, the model requires some resources, for sure, but nothing on the scale of the US Ivy League. It does not require dynamiting public universities by paying economists substantially higher salaries than their colleagues in other fields.

It does require, however, strong political will: the Council of Higher Education must implement in full the strongly-worded recommendations of the foreign experts it has commissioned to report on the state of Israeli economics education instead of dithering and waiting as it has done for so long.

It requires urgent action by the top universities to ditch byzantine recruitment procedures and rules which might have been harmless in a local market but are a death sentence in a global environment. It requires the cooperation of our (admittedly overworked) remaining colleagues in top Israeli economics departments, who must abandon a defeatist mindset that leads them to accept decay and look to the US to train their students. It requires the urgent involvement and cooperation of all the stakeholders in vibrant, frontier Israeli economic research: universities, the Bank of Israel, the government, the financial community, the private sector, and academics, of course.

Israel's well-being stems from its scholarly, scientific and technical excellence.

A further weakening of Israel's economic education will not only result in a dangerous fall in the country's human capital but will also have a dire, direct impact on its economy. The startup nation must behave more like a startup than like a shtetl when it comes to economic research and education.