



SIGNS OF THE TIMES

News Articles for Episode 260

[Israel seeks US support for IDF buildup as expert predicts Iran strike - Israel News - The Jerusalem Post \(jpost.com\)](#)

#bibleprophecy, #israel, #unitedstates, #support

Apr 14, 2023

The IDF's Military Intelligence Directorate informed the upper echelon on Thursday that Israel was closer to war than to a restoration of calm.

A top defense official sought United States support to bolster IDF forces as a security expert on Thursday predicted that Israel might have to strike Iran within the year to halt its [nuclear program](#).

“We held important meetings to promote significant projects focused on force buildup in the face of emerging security challenges – first and foremost, the [Iranian nuclear program](#),” Defense Ministry Director-General Maj.-Gen. (ret.) Eyal Zamir said.

He spoke after a meeting with US Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Colin Kahl in Washington, which took place as Israel remains in danger of an immediate war on one or all of three borders – Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria – after rockets were launched during the last week against Israel from all three fronts.

The IDF's Military Intelligence Directorate informed the upper echelon on Thursday that Israel was closer to war than to a restoration of calm, according to a report in Walla.

KAN News reported that the IDF is strengthening its air defense systems throughout the country, but that in an unusual way, it was orienting [Iron Dome batteries](#) in the direction of Lebanon and Syria, rather than keeping them focused more primarily on Gaza.

'We need to prepare for the war'

Former national security adviser Maj.-Gen. Yaakov Amidror warned against the dangers that Israel faced, both from Iran and from its two northern borders of Syria and Lebanon, in an interview he gave to Radio 103FM.

“We need to prepare for the war” for which the main component of the preparation would be the ability to execute a long-distance attack, Amidror said, adding that this was particularly important with respect to Iran.

“It could be that within the next year, we would get to the point where we would have to strike Iran to stop its nuclear program,” Amidror stated.

Israel would do this, even if it had to act alone without the United States, the former national security adviser said, explaining that it would likely receive arms and funding from Washington. The IDF has never relied on US involvement in such a strike and has planned to resolve its own security issues, he said.

“There is no need to change that” kind of self-reliance, Amidror explained.

He also warned against a pending war with the Iranian proxy group Hezbollah in Lebanon.

There would be a lot of damage to the home front in such a war with the Lebanese terrorist group, Amidror said.

These are “two completely different wars,” but for each one, the IDF has to be “very well prepared” given that they could break out in the next year, he explained.

Israel’s military deterrence has taken a hit as a result of the domestic turmoil over the judicial overhaul program, Amidror said. He referenced specifically the phenomenon of reservist soldiers who have threatened not to serve as a protest statement.

“The world looks at the State of Israel differently,” the major general said, adding that this was particularly true concerning nearby countries.

“They do not understand how it can be that within the State of Israel, there are threats to dismantle the military capability. This is how they understand the refusal movement of those who oppose the [judicial] reform.”

In an interview with Channel 14 on Thursday night, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that “if it’s up to me, Iran will not have nuclear weapons,” noting that Iran’s nuclear weapons program was advancing.

“We will not let the Ayatollahs stop Jewish history. We will do everything that we need to do to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. We will do everything that we need to do alone or with others,” he said, “but if we need to fight alone, we will do that.”

Netanyahu said that Israel’s enemies should not make the mistake of thinking that the domestic turmoil had weakened the Jewish state, noting that it had executed effective counter-strikes for all the rocket attacks against it.

He spoke specifically about the attempt by Hamas to launch rockets against Israel from bases in Lebanon.

“Hamas will not open a new front in Lebanon,” he said

“We are always prepared for a war,” the prime minister said, adding that Israel was so braced for it that if there was a measurement for such things, it would be 360 degrees of preparation.

“We are operating in all fronts and showing our enemies that... it is not a good idea to open a war with Israel,” Netanyahu said.

In Washington, Zamir spoke with Kahl about ways to strengthen Israel's Qualitative Military Edge, according to the Defense Ministry. He was also slated to meet with officials in the Pentagon and the State Department.

Zamir said that in his Washington talks, "I expressed the Israel Defense Ministry's appreciation for the American government's unwavering commitment to the State of Israel and its national defense and for ensuring Israel's qualitative military edge in the region."

In Iran, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corp staged parades against Israel on Thursday, in advance of Friday's annual Al-Quds day, which calls for the liberation of Palestine, specifically Jerusalem from Israeli "occupation."

Additional rallies are planned on Friday.

Iran's Foreign Ministry called to "terminate the savage crimes of Zionists."

The crimes of the "usurper Zionist regime [and] organized [and] blatant violation of the primary principles of human rights [and] established rules [and] regulations of int'l law as well as desecrating religious [and] Islamic sanctities and in particular the Al-Aqsa Mosque make it an urgent necessity for Muslims to get united and consolidated once again and support the heroic resistance of the Palestinian nation," the Iranian Foreign Ministry said.

Israeli PM: Peace with Saudi Arabia would be 'giant leap' towards ending Arab-Israeli conflict | Reuters

#bibleprophecy, #israel, #saudiarabia, #peace

Apr 17, 2023

JERUSALEM, April 17 (Reuters) - Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Monday that normalizing relations with Saudi Arabia would be a "giant leap" towards ending the Arab-Israeli conflict.

"We want normalization and peace with Saudi Arabia. We view that as perhaps a giant leap towards ending the Arab-Israeli conflict," Netanyahu said, speaking during a meeting in Jerusalem with U.S. Republican Senator Lindsey Graham.

"This agreement could have monumental consequences, historic consequences both for Israel, for Saudi Arabia, for the region and for the world," Netanyahu said.

Israel has opened diplomatic ties with several Arab countries since 2020, including Saudi Arabia's neighbors the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. But Riyadh has held back from recognizing Israel, saying such moves should be tied to resolving Palestinian statehood goals.

A huge setback for Netanyahu's efforts came last month when a China-brokered deal saw Israel's major regional foe, Iran, mend its ties with Saudi Arabia. Iran's embassy in Riyadh reopened its gates last Wednesday for the first time in seven years.

Separately on Monday, Israel's foreign ministry said it had asked China to exert influence on Iran to prevent it from obtaining nuclear weapons.

"I spoke with the Chinese Foreign Minister, Qin Gang, about the danger we see in the Iranian nuclear program, a danger that is shared by many countries in the region, including countries that have diplomatic relations with Iran," said Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen in a statement.

[Iran is waging a multi-front war of attrition against Israel - Gallant - Israel Politics - The Jerusalem Post \(jpost.com\)](#)

#bibleprophecy, #israel, #iran, #war

Apr 16, 2023

The IDF will act "in all arenas, even far from [Israel's borders]," the defense minister said in a Sunday night memorial ceremony.

[Tehran is fighting a war against Israel](#) on all fronts, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant warned on Sunday, as a Jerusalem-based think tank called for a suspension of judicial reform in light of the danger of a broad-scale conflict on Israel's borders and with Iran.

The IDF has "acted and will continue to act in all arenas, in overt and covert operations along the border, across the border, and even far from the border," Gallant said at a special memorial ceremony for those who fell in the battle for Jaffa in 1948.

"Iran is waging a multi-front war of attrition against the State of Israel," Gallant said, adding that it was "continuing its attempts to establish itself on the northern front and at the same time sending its proxies to Judea, Samaria and Gaza."

IDF remains braced for increased violence

He spoke as the IDF remains braced for increased violence, despite the uneasy calm that has followed [rocket attacks against Israel](#) earlier this month on its southern and northern borders.

On Sunday the Jerusalem Institute for Strategic Studies think tank published a position statement warning of such a war and urging [Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to suspend his judicial overhaul plan](#) in light of those threats.

"Israel is seen from the outside as a torn society, gradually losing its ability to function," JISS said, in a statement that echoed the words of one of its fellows, former National Security Advisor and former Maj.-Gen. Yaakov Amidror said last week.

"Israel's enemies are gaining confidence and expect the internal conditions in the Jewish state to lead to self-destruction," JISS stated. This is happening as the US is reducing its involvement in the Middle East and Iran is strengthening its ties with Middle East countries, primarily Saudi Arabia, it explained.

"The chances of a deterioration into a wider conflict are more significant today than before," JISS stated, adding that "Israel needs to prepare for the tangible possibility of war."

It's also likely, JISS said, that Israel could soon reach the point where "there will be no avoiding attacking Iran, even without American assistance."

Netanyahu, who spoke ahead of Gallant at the memorial service, said that Israel must always be able to defend itself with its own military. If superpowers want to mobilize to help, that is good, "but we cannot build our national security on the foundations of others."

He underscored the importance of national unity, as he explained that there was a limit to Israel's internal turmoil by quoting words uttered by former prime minister Menachem Begin.

"Civil War - never," Netanyahu said, but "national unity - absolutely."

[Legal pot sales eclipse sales of chocolate in the US as Americans reach for joints and berry edibles instead \(yahoo.com\)](#)

#bibleprophecy, chocolate, #marijuana, #americans

Apr 149, 2023

Why starting a marijuana business is so hard

Starting a weed business isn't easy. It can take \$1 million in startup capital to even get a license. And to keep a cannabis business going? That means jumping through complicated regulation hoops. If they can play the game right, cannabis entrepreneurs could be set up for success in an exploding marijuana industry. But with weed still federally illegal, companies could face fines or jail time if they don't follow the rules. We visited three companies in Colorado and Oregon to see how they're dealing with the ever-changing regulations. Could things get easier if weed becomes federally legal?

The \$30 billion figure is a little more than half of what US consumers spent on tobacco products, but cigarette sales are declining while weed sales are ramping up. Chicago Tribune / Contributor

- In 2022, Americans spent an estimated \$30 billion on legal marijuana products.
- Legal pot sales could top \$33 billion this year – more than chocolate and craft beer combined.
- New legalization in other states, including New York, is sending total US sales numbers skyward.

Americans love a good buzz, and they're forking over big bucks to get it.

In the decade after Colorado and Washington legalized recreational cannabis use for adults, another 20 states have followed suit, while 19 more allow for medical use of the substance.

The expanding geographic market has led total retail sales of pot to eclipse revenues from several other categories of products that people use to feel a little better, according to a new report from [MJBizDaily](#), a cannabis industry publication.

In 2022, Americans spent an estimated \$30 billion on legal marijuana products – more than they spent on opioid medications (\$22.8 billion) and topical pain relief (\$2.8 billion) combined, MJBizDaily found.

Last year's total also exceeds the combined total sales of chocolate and craft beer, which saw \$20 billion and \$7.9 billion, respectively.

The figure is a little more than half of the \$52.7 billion that US consumers spent on tobacco products, but cigarette sales are declining while weed sales are ramping up.

If trends continue, MJBizDaily projects cannabis sales could reach as high as \$33.6 billion this year and climb to nearly \$57 billion by 2028.

And while medical cannabis currently represents roughly one-third of total sales, the report finds that level is expected to shrink as consumers turn to more readily accessible recreational options.

Of course, legal sales are still [vastly outweighed by illicit ones](#) – Whitney Economics [estimated](#) that legal transactions constituted just 25% of the total cannabis market in the US in 2021.

Vape pens and pre-rolls are starting to chip away at the market dominance of the bud – flower in industry parlance – and a proliferation of formats like beverages, resins, and tinctures is also driving a substantial proportion of sales.

Gummies are the most widely consumed edible, generating roughly \$100 million in monthly sales. In March 2023 alone, retailers sold nearly \$20 million of berry gummies, according to research firm Headset, which looked at sales from Arizona, California, Colorado, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington State.

Robust as the total US sales numbers are, recent years have not been kind to the cannabis industry. Rising prices and economic uncertainty, coupled with [tumultuous financial and regulatory challenges](#), make it harder for businesses to stay afloat.

Even so, the demand is clearly there, [waiting for state and federal lawmakers](#) to catch up.

Read the original article on [Business Insider](#)

Macron comments on Taiwan raise questions on EU global ties | AP News

#bibleprophecy, #macron, #taiwan, #superpower

Apr 10, 2023

Comments by French President Emmanuel Macron over Europe's priorities on Taiwan have raised questions over the EU's relationship with both the U.S. and China, on the eve of his planned speech on the bloc's sovereignty in The Netherlands.

Macron's remarks were published Sunday in an interview with French newspaper Les Echos and Politico Europe.

"The question we need to answer, as Europeans, is the following: is it in our interest to accelerate (a crisis) on Taiwan? No," Macron was quoted as saying in the interview. "The worst thing would be to think that we Europeans must become followers on this topic and take our cue from the U.S. agenda and a Chinese overreaction."

The comments were made Friday, before China launched [large-scale combat exercises around Taiwan](#) that simulated sealing off the island in response to the Taiwanese president's trip to the U.S. last week.

Macron spoke to reporters on his way back from a three-day [state visit to China](#), where he spoke at length with President Xi Jinping, including about Taiwan, according to Macron's office.

The remarks have drawn wide attention on social media, and experts raised questions about whether Macron's views are in line with the European Union's position and whether the bloc of 27 is able to become the "third superpower" that Macron says he hopes to build within "a few years."

Asked about Macron's comments Monday, White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby insisted that the U.S. and France have a "terrific bilateral cooperation" and closely coordinate on security issues in Ukraine, the Indo-Pacific, the Sahel and elsewhere.

"We're focused on ... making sure that together we're meeting the national security requirements of both countries," Kirby said.

Macron on Tuesday is to start a two-day state visit in The Netherlands, where he is scheduled to make a speech on Europe's sovereignty, with a focus on the economy and industry, according to his office.

"We, Europeans, must wake up. Our priority is not others' agendas in all regions of the world," Macron said in the interview.

He emphasized the concept of “strategic autonomy” for Europe which he has promoted for years. He warned of what he called the “trap” that would lead to the bloc “getting caught up in crises that are not ours.”

“We don’t want to depend on others for critical topics,” he insisted.

Politico said Macron’s office asked to check the president’s quotes before they were published, a common practice in France, leading to some parts of the interview in which he “spoke even more frankly about Taiwan and Europe’s strategic autonomy” getting cut out.

[New UN-backed legal recommendations normalize sex with minors, outraged critics say | Fox News](#)

#bibleprophecy, #sex, #pedophilia, #un

Apr 17, 2023

'Children may consent to sex with adults. This has been the plan all along,' social media influencer charges

A shocking report issued by international legal experts with the backing of [the United Nations](#) appears to open the floodgates to normalize sex with minors.

"Sexual conduct involving persons below the domestically prescribed minimum age of consent to sex may be consensual in fact, if not in law," the Geneva-based [International Commission of Jurists](#) wrote in March with an assist from UNAIDS and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The report is titled "The 8 March Principles for a Human Rights-Based Approach to Criminal Law Proscribing Conduct Associated with Sex, Reproduction, Drug Use, HIV, Homelessness and Poverty."

It is published front-and-center on the group's website.

It does not actively call for decriminalizing sex between adults and minors. But it [states that children](#) have both the capacity and the legal right to make sexual decisions.

"According to the United Nations, children may consent to sex with adults. This has been the plan all along," social media influencer Ian Miles Cheong tweeted over the weekend to his 538,000 followers.

The report does not offer a suggested age of sexual consent.

It was released on March 8 in recognition of [International Women's Day](#), the commission states online, suggesting there is a connection between women's rights and age of sexual consent.

The once-unthinkable recommendations from an international cabal of global elite legal minds appears to suggest that pedophilia could be normalized.

It touched off a horrified reaction on social media around the world.

"The UN is full of pedophiles!!!!" [former NHL star](#) and Canadian Olympic gold medalist Theo Fleury shouted on Twitter.

"Sexual conduct involving persons below the domestically prescribed minimum age of consent to sex may be consensual in fact, if not in law." — International Commission of Jurists

"This hideous UN report ... seeks to decriminalize sex — even between children and minors. Evil," tweeted women's rights activist Michelle Uriarau of [Melbourne, Australia](#).

She notes that its publication on International Women's Day succeeded in "gaslighting women everywhere."

The International Commission of Jurists added in its report, "In this context, the enforcement of criminal law should reflect the rights and capacity of persons under 18 years of age to make decisions about engaging in consensual sexual conduct and their right to be heard in matters concerning them."

TEACHERS UNION URGES SCHOOLS TO PROMOTE DRAG QUEEN STORY HOURS TO FURTHER 'INCLUSIVE ATMOSPHERE'

It said further, "Pursuant to their evolving capacities and progressive autonomy, persons under 18 years of age should participate in decisions affecting them, with due regard to their age, maturity and best interests, and with specific attention to non-discrimination guarantees."

"Persons under 18 years of age should participate in decisions affecting them, with due regard to their age, maturity and best interests." — International Commission of Jurists

The shocking recommendations from international legal elites underscore a number of major recent events in the United States and around the world that have unfolded with bewildering speed.

Each development suggests people in positions of authority have worked to break traditional legal bounds, societal structures and once-universal taboos for the purpose of sexualizing children.

Among them: The disturbing case of Jeffrey Epstein, who was convicted of running an international prostitution ring, reportedly provided underage girls to global power players.

There is also the sudden dramatic rise in the number of transgender people and normalization of transgender culture, fueled by popular culture and public education, defying all known historic precedent.

In addition, educators in many instances now brazenly state that [parents have](#) limited rights over their children while their classrooms grow increasingly sexualized.

"From long years in the law, and as a proudly gay man, I know profoundly how criminal law signals which groups are deemed worthy of protection — and which of

condemnation and ostracism," wrote retired Judge Edwin Cameron of the Constitutional Court of South Africa in the foreword of the report.

"In this way, the criminal law performs an expressive function — and it has dramatic consequences on people's lives. It sometimes entails a harshly discriminatory impact on groups identified with the disapproved or stigmatized conduct."

Fox News Digital reached out to the International Commission of Jurists, UNAIDS and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for comment.

The report, the group says, was "developed over a five-year consultative process, following an initial expert meeting of jurists convened in 2018 by the ICJ — together with the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) — to discuss the role of jurists in addressing the detrimental human rights impact of certain criminal laws."

It also says, "The process of elaboration ... included expert jurists, academics, legal practitioners, human rights defenders and various civil society organizations working in diverse legal traditions."

[Christians warned not to play 'Holy Spirit' Ouija board game | Entertainment News \(christianpost.com\)](#)

#bibleprophecy, #christians, #holyspirit, #game, #ouijaboard

Apr 14, 2023

A new board game marketed as a “Christian” version of the Ouija board has been criticized as satanic and a “trap from the devil.”

Named “The Holy Spirit Board by Holy Spirit Games - Christian Religious Talking Board for Seance with Planchette,” the game advertises itself on [Amazon](#) as a way to help people talk directly to “our lord and savior Jesus Christ!”

“GET THE ANSWERS YOU NEED! — The Holy Spirit Board can answer all of life’s most important questions, straight from the man himself!” the board's description adds. “Unlike other spirit boards that are often used to contact ghosts and demons, this is a one way ticket straight to heaven.”

While the board's layout looks similar to a Ouija board, it differs by including an image of Jesus crucified on the cross, three angels, a dove and a cross to be moved around on the board.

In a recent interview with [EWTN's "News Nightly,"](#) Roman Catholic Father Ernesto Caro of the Diocese of Monterey, Mexico, who's also an exorcist, criticized the board game as a “trap from the devil.”

“The devil is always looking for different ways he can trap all the victims that he can take for him. And this is one,” Caro said in the segment. “Ouija games and all this are forbidden in the Bible.”

Caro said the Holy Spirit Board was created to deceive Catholics and Christians by using religious imagery they're familiar with. He warned that it's no different than a Ouija board deployed to capture believers. “Ouija games ... and all this are forbidden in the Bible.”

The priest further warned that the board could potentially start “opening a door that could be dangerous for you” and that a player might “think that it is God who is talking with you, but it’s not. If the [Ouija board] triangle is moving by itself, be careful. It’s not God who is moving; it’s the devil,” Caro added.

The Catholic Church rejects and condemns the use of Ouija boards labeling it an occult participation and divination, according to [No. 2116 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church](#).

"All forms of divination are to be rejected: recourse to Satan or demons, conjuring up the dead or other practices falsely supposed to 'unveil' the future. Consulting horoscopes, astrology, palm reading, interpretation of omens and lots, the phenomena of clairvoyance, and recourse to mediums all ... contradict the honor, respect, and loving fear that we owe to God alone," states the Catechism.

When host Tracy Sabol asked Caro what people should do if they have bought the game, Caro said they should dispose of the board as quickly as possible, go to confession and "repent and ask God for liberation" through a priest's blessings for protection.

[Study Shows Americans Who Read the Bible ‘Have Far More Hope’ than Non-Bible Readers - Michael Foust \(christianheadlines.com\)](#)

#bibleprophecy, #hope, #christians, #bible

Apr 11, 2023

Americans who regularly read and engage with the Bible are more likely than non-Bible readers to walk daily with hope, according to a new study.

The poll by the American Bible Study asked Americans questions from the so-called Persevering Hope Scale, a psychological assessment test popular among researchers. It uses phrases that are free of biblical language.

“In dealing with the struggles of life, people who engage with the Bible have far more hope than others,” the [report](#) said.

The Persevering Hope Scale asks individuals to rate their response to a series of questions on a grade of 1 (not at all) to 5 (very). The Persevering Hope Scale asks: “When an outcome I desire seems unlikely or even impossible, I ...

- “Am determined to see things through to the end.
- “Will keep trying.
- “Won’t give up.
- “Am motivated to wait for a successful outcome.”

In most people groups, scores were similar in the American Bible Society study. Men and women, for example, each scored 3.8. There also were little generational differences, with Boomers scoring a 3.8 and Elders scoring 3.7.

Among all Americans, the average score was 3.8.

Yet among Americans who are “Scripture engaged,” the score was 4.1. Americans who are “Bible disengaged” scored a 3.7.

“In a field with little variation, these are significant effects,” the report said. “No other demographic group scored that high. Apparently those who read the Bible regularly, who live and think according to its teaching, find resources that keep them going, even in tough times.”

The report defines the “Scripture engaged” as those who: 1) say the Bible impacts their daily lives, 2) say it helps guide their relationships with God and others, and 3) say they regularly read/listen to the Bible.

The Bible teaches Christians to be filled with hope, the report noted.

“This was clearly the case in New Testament times, when the book of 1 Peter was written to Christians facing opposition to their faith,” the report said. “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have’ ([1 Peter 3:15](#)). In spite of life’s challenges, believers displayed a persevering hope that was noteworthy, prompting questions about where it came from. This research suggests it is still true today.”

The poll is part of the American Bible Society’s [State of the Bible](#) 2023 report.