

Trump's truancy

written by David M. Weinberg | 07.12.2025

US President Donald Trump's unprecedented record of pro-Israel diplomatic and defense moves and his commitment to Israel remains undeniable. Any of the other candidates in recent years for US presidency would not have matched, and most of those likely to be presidential candidates in 2028 are unlikely to match, Trump's staunchly pro-Israel record.

Therefore, Israel must appreciate and work with Trump as best possible over the next two years to lock-in further gains (as Martin Oliner this week correctly argued in these pages).

But the fact that Donald Trump does not do ideology is problematic. His exceptionally transactional approach to political and foreign affairs – thinking that money, dealmaking, and the force of his personality can fix everything and lead to swift peace everywhere – is refreshing but also dangerous. It leads him to ignore the villainous nature of people like Ahmed al-Sharaa and Zohran Mamdani.

I can understand to some extent Trump's buttering-up of the new Syrian president Sharaa (aka Mohammed Al-Jolani). America has a strategic interest in drawing Syria into the US orbit, and away from Russia and Iran. Israel shares this aspiration (although doubts that Sharaa is a reliable partner).

I can understand to some extent Trump's love fest with Saudi and Emirati leaders, which stems from strategic reasons (as above) alongside Trump's great desire for mega-investments in America from these extremely wealthy countries.

Israel shares Trump's aspiration for expansion of Abraham Accord-style regional partnerships with the Saudis (although it should not and will not pay the diplomatic high price for such accords that the Saudis apparently are currently demanding).

But Trump's buddy-buddy-like meeting in the Oval Office with Mamdani, the incoming mayor of New York City, upsets me terribly. As does Trump's non-response to virulent antisemitic voices emerging in a significant branch of his own political party.

Mamdani represents a broad cultural shift in America in which opposition to Jewish peoplehood has become a mark of moral virtue. Mamdani's victory means that it is legitimate to slander Israel with allegations of genocide and tar all Jews with insinuations of apartheid and "white" slave-mastering; that it is kosher to wage Marxist and Islamist class warfare against Jews and Zionists.

Tucker Carlson of the extremist MAGA right-wing represents the rise of Nazi-like and Christian supersessionist thinking in radical Republican circles.

So I cringe and cry when President Trump sits in his Oval Office chair silently by as Mamdani brazenly accuses Israel and its main backer, the United States of America, of genocide and war crimes. As if this was not any offense to Trump and to America, as if this were not an outrage against Jews and Israelis, and as if this weren't an assault on truth and decency.

I shudder when Trump has nothing to say about Carlson's consorting with Holocaust-denying and outright Jew-hating creeps like Nick Fuentes. As if this did not happen, as if this has no major impact on public discourse in the mainstream political party that Trump claims to lead.

IN TRUTH, Trump may not have been listening to either Mamdani or Carlson. He has, as we have learned, a wooden ear for all things ideological. He thinks that only the practical political act is meaningful, that all leaders can be cajoled or wedged into his lane by the force of a deal.

Now it is true as Trump loyalists have said that there is value in wearing one's ideology lightly. This allows for the flow of fresh thought, frees one up to react to crises in unexpected and novel ways, and keeps your enemies guessing.

But in the long term, Trump's ideological truancy is rigorously wrong. Rejection of moral limits in politics and ignorance of ideological currents in global affairs lead to incoherent or corrupt policy or both. Combine this with narcissist craving for deals that ostensibly prove one's "greatness," and you have a recipe for bad results. You open the door to gargantuan strategic mistakes and to deep ideological rot.

The two immediate theaters where such bad policy results are emerging are the Russia-Ukraine and Hamas-Israel conflicts.

Ukraine is being abandoned by Trump to Russian ravaging, and Israel is being handcuffed in its existential war with radical annihilationist Islam.

Kyiv is expected to permanently relinquish Donbas to Russian conquest, and Jerusalem dare not make a military move without Trump's approval. Neither Ukraine nor Israel can upset the transactional-on-steroids, global and regional "peace" deals that Trump is driving.

In the Middle East, it is ridiculously inappropriate to declare "peace in our time for the first time in 3,000 years," while imposing a flawed freeze on the situation. Hamas, Hezbollah, the Houthis, and Iran have not been sufficiently defanged or deterred.

In Gaza specifically, Trump seems to be dialing back from demands for real disarmament of Hamas and instead pushing for rapid reconstruction while overseeing the free flow of humanitarian aid straight into the hands of Hamas. Equally upsetting is Trump's internationalization of the conflict in Gaza by inviting-in Egyptian and Turkish troops and offering the snake-like Qataris a central role in controlling territory bordering Israel.

Alas, Trump's non-dogmatic methodology for "solving" conflicts, refreshing in some contexts, is deleterious here. It ignores the fact that major actors in the regions like Turkey, Qatar, and Iran apply an ideological-hegemonic prism to regional affairs, and are in fact fighting a civilizational against America and the Western world (and of course against Israel).

It ignores the need to distinguish between good and evil, between victim and perpetrator, between necessary escalation and all-out civilizational collapse.

In this regard, the Jewish People and the State of Israel are this generation's great generator of moral purpose. We are attempting to awaken the West from suicidal slumber, from dangerous cultural and strategic malaise; to help Trump and the West defend against the worst radical actors on the world stage and rout the insidious forces that threaten to undermine Western righteousness from within.

Published in The Jerusalem Post and Israel Hayom 05.12.2025