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In this blog, we look beyond the headlines to understand how political developments throughout the country affect our Israeli-American community and the issues we all hold dear. Our goal is to provide basic context and foster understanding that encourages greater civic engagement and informs decision-making by our community members.

This Friday, we mark a quarter century since the worst terrorist attack in our country's history. We also mark the beginning of a new year on the Hebrew calendar. This is an opportunity for reflection not just on a personal level, but on a national one.

The post-9/11 era is over

I view the national American psyche as cyclical. At times of peace, Americans largely like to look inward. There's no shortage of domestic issues to tackle in the United States, which occupy public attention and the news cycle. Stable relationships with the United States' neighbors to the north and south, along with relative dominance in this hemisphere (and two oceans separating us from the other) contribute to a desire among many to isolate (and insulate) the United States from global developments.

Shifts in public attitudes happen when a threat to national security emerges, or when global events disrupt the economy so much that their effect on Americans' everyday lives become undeniable. These shifts are usually clearly marked on the timeline, such as attacks on American ships during WWI, Pearl Harbor during WWII, and of course – the September 11th terrorist attacks.

These shifts are not just in government policy, but in the public beliefs that shape it. It is when Americans believe that their way and quality of life are under external threat, that the public attitude pendulum swings from isolationism to interventionism. While this swing is often sharp, the swing back is usually slow and gradual.

A new generation of young American adults was not yet born during, or was too young to grasp the scale of, the September 11th attacks as they were happening. They are not emotionally moved by the attacks, but see them as a historic event, from before their time, that need not affect their views on current affairs.

I cannot say I blame them, as this is human nature. Events we read about in history books cannot spark the same reaction as events we encountered in our adult or adolescent lives. With this lack of an emotional connection, comes a lack of a cognitive one, and reduced understanding of America's need to remain front-and-center on the global stage. Seeing American attitudes today, both in public spheres and among our elected officials, I can only conclude that the pendulum has swung back to the side of isolation and insulation. The post-9/11 era is behind us.

I continue to believe, however, that these shifts are cyclical. It is precisely American retreat from global affairs that makes way for rising external threats. A continued push for American isolation will only intensify the dangers surrounding us. We are now in the “pre-“ era of the next major global event.

5787: What's in store

One never knows what's truly ahead in the year to come. However, here are a few key dates to look at on our political calendar:

16 Cheshvan – an election in Israel, the first one to be held on its originally-scheduled date since 1988. In my assessment, tectonic shifts in Israelis' political thinking post-October 7th, will make way for new political attitudes, agendas and alliances that will fundamentally reshape Israeli politics in the long term. This may not be fully reflected in this year's election, but changes are brewing.

23 Cheshvan – just one week after Israel, America has its own midterm election. I would pay especially close attention to the Senate race in Michigan between Republican Mike Rogers and Democrat Abdul Al-Sayed. As I've written before – the results of this race will shape intra-Democratic dynamics for years to come, including in relation to the 2028 Presidential race.

24 Tevet – the 120th US Congress is sworn in. Potential majority changes, particularly in the Senate, will determine the nature of the 2nd half of President Trump's 2nd term.

Tishrei-Kislev – The United States and Israel will continue to engage in negotiations towards a renewed memorandum of understanding (MoU) on the future of US security assistance and collaboration with Israel. While a deal early in the year is not guaranteed, Prime Minister Netanyahu will make an utmost effort to secure one in advance of Israel's next election, and the formation of a new government.

28 Iyar – Jerusalem Day 2027 will mark 60 years since the liberation of the Old City and Israel's victory in the Six Day War. As the future status of territories won through that war weighs more on the minds of global leaders, this anniversary may draw particular attention.

Sivan-Av – Early primary debates for the 2028 Presidential Election may begin in both the Republican and Democratic parties. For Democrats, a heated race is expected. Republican dynamics will likely hinge on Vice President Vance's decision about potentially throwing his hat in the ring.

Wishing all readers a Shana Tova, full of joy and laughter, and also a healthy amount of civic engagement!