

NEWS BYTES

June 2, 2021

No. 1020

Since 2001

A ministry of Calvary Chapel of Appleton

“Let us be alert to the season in which we are living. It is the season of the Blessed Hope, calling for us to cut our ties with the world and build ourselves on this One who will soon appear. He is our hope—a Blessed Hope enabling us to rise above our times and fix our gaze upon Him.” Tozer

Smart Rings Seen as New Frontier for Cashless Payments

By

Shiho Takezawa and Masatsugu Horie *May 24, 2021*

Japanese health company develops ring to replace wallets, keys



MTG aims to spin off ring unit into separate listed subsidiary

MTG's smartring "Evering" Source: EVERING Corp.

As retailers around the world seek ways to make it easier for consumers to shop seamlessly without touching anything, one company in Japan is betting its technology can rule them all: a smart ring that can act as a wallet and a key.

MTG Co., a Japanese health and beauty company, has started selling the "Evering," which it envisions as a one-stop digital wallet. The chip-embedded ring, made out of zirconia, the synthetic crystal that's sometimes used in place of diamonds in jewelry, lets people lock their door as they step out for a run as well as pay for drinks in stores.

MTG earlier this month struck a contract with Visa Inc. for the sale of an initial batch of 3,000 rings in Japan.

Matt Levine's Money Stuff is what's missing from your inbox.

The Covid-19 pandemic has made touchless payments a much more popular method of purchasing. Amazon.com Inc. is pushing into cashier-less stores and deploying technology that lets consumers enter shops and pay using palm scans. In Japan, Signpost Corp. has deployed stores that don't have any clerks or registers in a kiosk on the platforms of a train stations. In China, technology that employs facial recognition software is already being used for payments.

"We want to make a world in which people can live with a ring," Yoshihito Ohta, MTG's chairman, said in an interview.

Evering users make payments by holding it over a payment terminal. Priced initially at 19,800 yen (\$182) in Japan, the ring, which is waterproof and doesn't require charging, is linked to a credit card and payment histories can be accessed via smartphones.

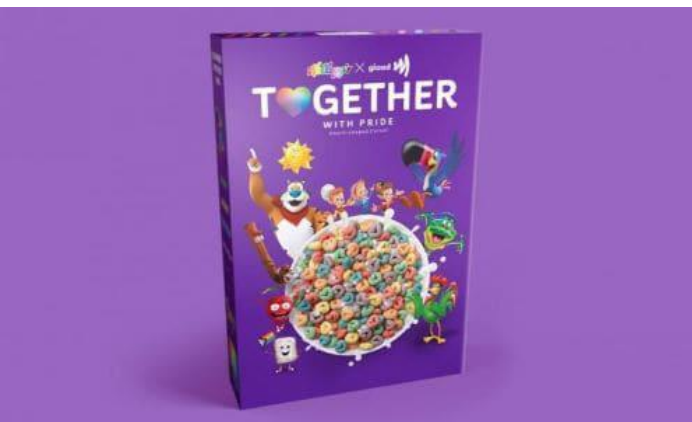
MTG, which went public in 2018 on Tokyo Stock Exchange's Mothers Market, a bourse for startups, plans to spin off its smart-ring subsidiary within months, Ohta said. The chairman's goal is for Evering to reach a market capitalization of at least 100 billion yen, which would be higher than MTG's current valuation of 60.4 billion yen.

The company posted an operating profit of 1.2 billion yen in the latest fiscal year, which ended in September, recovering from a 14.4 billion yen deficit the prior period due to an accounting scandal at its China unit. MTG shares are up about 34% this year, after climbing 30% last year.

"The business has potential to grow," Ohta said of Evering. "It's risky, but I think no other business has bigger potential than this."

Kids Are Asked To Choose Their Pronouns On New Kellogg's 'Pride' Cereal

prophecynewswatch.com



In what is perhaps the most unappetizing headline of 2021, the Weekly Metro announced that "Kellogg's new LGBTQ cereal wants to fill your mouth with pride," because everything must be gay now and the virtue must be signaled.

Big Business has realized that there is a lot of money in wrapping yourself in the rainbow flag, and so as "Pride Month" (yes, an entire month) grows closer, corporate social media avatars, ATMs, and business signs will suddenly be bedecked in rainbows.

News Image BY JONATHON VAN MAREN/BRIDGEHEAD.CA MAY 24, 2021

Kellogg's, which has traditionally been known for its cartoon animals, is partnering with GLAAD (Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) to release a new cereal called "Together With Pride," which will hit the shelves next month and cost \$4 per purple box -- \$3 of which will go to GLAAD.

The cereal itself will feature rainbow-colored cereal in the shape of hearts and edible glitter. Kellogg's, which has partnered with GLAAD at least once previously, has featured nearly all of its famous cartoon characters on the box.

"We believe that all young people and those young at heart deserve an environment where they can grow up to be their best selves," the caption on the box reads. "That's why we've joined forces with GLAAD by going purple on Spirit Day to stand up against bullying in all forms, and support a more accepting world for LGBTQ youth."

It goes without saying that this sort of publicity stunt also allows Kellogg's to pose as being on The Right Side of History as opposed to merely a breakfast cereal -- and it is important, apparently, for children to think deeply about gay issues at breakfast.

In fact, Kellogg's went above and beyond to ensure that your kids can go woke just after waking. On the side of the box, children are asked to choose their pronouns, with options like "he/him," "she/her," and "they/them," which, if you haven't been keeping up, isn't plural so much as "nonbinary" or just bewildered.

There are also some helpful blanks spaces in case you want to fill in your own, because at this stage in the revolution we're just making stuff up and everyone has to go along with it. (I'm not kidding. One clever teen chose "His Majesty" as his preferred pronoun.)

This sort of thing has become standard over the last few years, and it is a good indication of which way the cultural winds are blowing. Corporations are greedy, and so they have three primary reasons for going gay: First, they sense that the culture is leaning in that direction, and so they want to be seen as precisely where their customers are.

Second, many corporate business leaders are filthy rich liberals who feel guilty about how well-off they are and feel the need to justify their wealth, and so joining the revolution on the Right Side is one way of doing that.

And third, many companies are screwing their employees in favor of their shareholders or utilizing cheap labor in developing countries, so it helps to have some woke credentials to stave off questions from progressives who trade social virtue signaling for actual leftist policies.

Corporate power may be growing at a rate that makes the Gilded Age look poor, but GLAAD is glad to provide cover in exchange for a few bucks for decadent displays of public nudity. Happy Pride, everyone.

Ten Takeaways From The Latest Conflict Between Israel And Hamas

Alex Traiman

jns.org



Over this past weekend, Arabs were shooting fireworks in the sky, supposedly in celebration of holding Israeli population centers hostage for 11 days with more than 4,000 rockets. Fireworks shooting upwards represented a dramatic improvement over the previous week, during which the celebratory projectiles were being shot horizontally at police within Israeli cities, and Hamas rockets and Israel missile defenses lit the night skies.

If sending Israelis in and out of bomb shelters for nearly two weeks is a victory for Palestinian factions, so be it.

Israelis came out virtually unscathed.

1. Israel's military is among the world's best

The star of the latest conflict was Israel's Iron Dome. While Hamas placed their military fortunes in unsophisticated rockets fired indiscriminately towards Israeli population centers, Israeli missile defense demonstrated just how deep the gap is between fighting units. Israel's Iron Dome system shot down nearly 90 percent of the rockets identified in real time as flying toward Jewish civilians.

Meanwhile, Israel pounded Hamas infrastructure day after day, striking at 1,000-plus strategic targets with precision accuracy. Such strikes could not possibly have occurred without superior intelligence. Included in those targets were Hamas intelligence and operational centers, rocket caches, missile-launchers, drones, naval installations and a sophisticated underground tunnel network.

Israel brilliantly manipulated Twitter and mainstream media to announce a ground invasion early on into the Gaza Strip to serve as a decoy to lure Hamas fighters into the tunnels. With terrorists inside, Israel destroyed the entire tunnel network before alerting the media that the announcement had been a mistake.

The number of Palestinian civilian casualties at the hands of an Israeli military that struck those 1,000 targets was unmistakably and near-impossibly low for wartime conditions. Unlike previous operations in 2006 in Southern Lebanon and 2014 in Gaza, the 2021 operation was not highlighted by any lack of preparedness, military miscues, cross-border infiltrations, kidnappings or killing of Israeli soldiers.

Despite what critics of Israel's government might state, the Israel Defense Forces did its job admirably. Malign actors across the region from Hezbollah in Southern Lebanon to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in Iran are sure to have taken notice. The military achievement is a continuation of ongoing successful Israeli airstrikes in Syria, as well as covert operations inside Iran.

2. Hamas suffered a military humiliation

Well more than 4,000 rockets and 62 miles of tunnel networks that took years of development and cost hundreds of millions if not billions to construct killed a grand total of 12 people in Israel before being utterly decimated. Furthermore, some 650 of the rockets fired at Israel landed inside the Gaza Strip.

It is believed that at least 60 of the casualties inside Gaza were caused by Hamas rockets, including an entire family of eight. To put it into better perspective, Hamas killed more Gazans with their rockets than they killed Israelis.

Despite the celebratory fireworks, Hamas was completely humiliated. In terms of military strategy, Hamas is an unmitigated disaster. Israelis know it, as do Palestinians. It will take Gaza and its terror gang years to recover.

3. Gaza is not the most dangerous Palestinian battlefield

While Israel did all it could to focus attention on Hamas inside Gaza, the southwestern Palestinian enclave is only one front in a larger battle against the Jewish state. Gaza is relatively easy to bombard from the air, while Gazans beyond a border fence cannot commit individual acts of terror inside Israel.

In the Palestinian Authority-controlled areas of the West Bank--known in Israel as Judea and Samaria--factions including Fatah and Hamas are jockeying for power, as aging kleptocrat Mahmoud Abbas continues to lose his grip on a fed-up Palestinian street. One tried-and-true method for gaining popularity among the Palestinian public has been launching terror campaigns against Israel.

Within Israeli territory, more than a million Arabs hold Israeli identity cards. Many are registered voters. Yet with the exception of a few mixed cities, most live in segregated enclaves, as is the situation in Jerusalem.

Rioting and lynching attempts in cities such as Lod, Bat Yam, Jaffa, Ramle, Akko, Haifa, Tiberias and Jerusalem leading up to and during the Gaza conflict demonstrate that internal hostilities remain a risk.

Though incidents have not reached top headlines, there has been an increase in attacks, including a recent drive-by shooting that killed one and seriously wounded two other Israelis two weeks ago in Samaria. Two Israelis were stabbed during a terror attack at a Jerusalem light-rail station on Monday.

Just because a ceasefire has been declared in Gaza does not necessarily mean all Israeli-Palestinian hostilities are over. Cooler heads may prevail and calm may be restored, but a new intifada may be lurking around the corner. The IDF and an understaffed police force may not be as well-equipped to handle a surge in urban domestic terror.

4. Narrative warfare: It all started when he hit me back

Regardless of measures Israel may have futilely attempted to reduce and avoid hostilities, Hamas--with aid from Western media--had already constructed its narrative: Hamas had no choice but to fire rockets from Gaza once Israeli police had "stormed the Al-Aqsa mosque."

It makes no difference in the narrative war that Israeli police entered the complex to break up riots, where Arabs were tossing Molotov cocktails, shooting fireworks and throwing stones at Jewish worshippers at the Western Wall prayer complex some 70 meters below.

The narrative claims that an annual Jerusalem Day parade is now a "far-right nationalist" event that "stoked tensions." Similarly, the narrative insists that a war was necessitated over the eviction of 13 families from the Palestinian neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah. The neighborhood is also home to the Jewish holy gravesite of "Simon the Righteous" ("Shimon HaTzadik").

The property dispute in question was about to be heard in Israel's left-wing Supreme court, had been circulating through the court system for 30 years, and the hearing was ultimately postponed. Either way, according to the narrative, any eviction is the justification for war.

Nobody seems concerned that Israel evicted as many as 10,000 Jews from 21 fully-developed Israeli communities in the Gaza Strip in 2005 specifically in an attempt to avoid future wars and has evicted Jews from their homes on several other occasions. According to the narrative, evicting Jews is appropriate, while evicting Palestinians, even in the case of outright private property theft, is not.

As long as Hamas can sell a narrative--one that most Western media can easily parrot--then there can be justification for an attack. This has happened countless times in the past and will undoubtedly happen again in the not-too-distant future.

5. Narrative warfare: The battle for hearts and minds

The reason that Palestinians claim victory has nothing to do with the exceedingly minor physical damage inflicted on Israel. Rather, it is because Palestinians perceive that they scored points the greater battle fought in the minds and hearts of Israelis, Palestinians and the international community.

Palestinians are convincing themselves and others that Israel has been weakened in an era in which facts, details and context are less relevant than ever before; truth and lies are regularly interchanged in the media; and opinions and buy-ins are what matter most.

Israelis don't necessarily see it that way. Anti-Israel and pro-Palestinian sentiments, and accusations from the international community, are nothing new. Israelis are among the thickest-skinned citizenry in the world, and well-versed in overcoming biases and handling adversity. The opinions that matter most to Israelis are those of Israelis themselves. The only doubts that Israelis have about the recent flare-up is whether they inflicted enough damage against Hamas before the world begged them to stop.

6. #PalestinianLivesMatter

Israelis watched from afar with amazement as violent riots enveloped American cities this past year under the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter. Race became the most important issue. Members of the anti-Israel community in the United States had long ago linked up with progressive causes--an irony considering how far from progressive Palestinian society is.

It appears that Palestinians have successfully adopted the BLM mentality and are being welcomed in with open arms. It doesn't matter that Israel is the most liberal country in the Middle East by far and one of the most liberal in the world.

According to the narrative, Israelis are the white, oppressive colonialists, regardless of the fact that more than 50 percent of Israelis are of Middle Eastern descent (meaning brown-skinned) whose families were forcibly evicted from their homes out of nearly every Muslim country in the region after living in those countries as second-class dhimmi citizens.

Plus, there are a sizable number of Ethiopian immigrants (black-skinned), many of whom arrived as refugees. Among the remaining Israelis of European descent, a large portion are descendants of survivors of the Holocaust--an actual genocide.

Yet as long as Palestinians will succeed to remain the step-sister of #BlackLivesMatter, Israel will be in for a bumpy period in the court of public opinion.

7. Does the Democratic Party still support Israel?

For decades, Democrats were the party that supported Israel--in large part, because Jews, with roots as an immigrant minority class in America, have overwhelmingly supported Democratic candidates. Israel, however, pushed to make support for its defense a bipartisan issue and largely convinced Republicans to begin supporting Israel as well. Evangelical Christians began increasing their support for Israel, further encouraging Republicans to be increasingly supportive.

But America has become polarized. In age where there are virtually no bipartisan issues, Israel found itself in a bad spot. With religious evangelical fervor behind support for Israel, Democrats have all but dropped the baton.

And while the old guard of the Democratic Party has long supported Israel, the younger, more progressive group does not hold Israel in the same regard. They know Israel only through the prism of the failed Oslo Accords. This young guard has taken over the momentum of the party to the fear of the old guard losing their seats (see: Eliot Engel) in upcoming primaries to younger, more progressive upstarts.

As such, even some members of the old guard were hesitant to back Israel with the same intensity that they have in the past, if at all. It's not clear if Israel will be able to count on Democrat Party support in future conflicts.

8. The money trail: towards peace or violence?

The Trump administration was charting a new course toward peace in the Middle East. The principles were simple: punish malign actors with sanctions, financially incentivize peace and solve the Middle East conflict from the outside-in.

Iran was sanctioned harder than any nation in history. The Palestinian Authority, as well as U.N. agencies that supported their agenda, such as UNRWA, was defunded. And normalization agreements were signed between Israel, and the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco.

The approach worked. The four years of the Trump administration were by and large among the quietest years in Israel's modern history. Yet the approach was a slap in the face of the U.S. State Department establishment that has long posited that there can never be peace anywhere in the region until the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is solved.

The latest flare-up puts the Israeli-Palestinian issue back on center stage in the familiar territory of the authors and supporters of the Oslo Accords, who are beginning to come back to the forefront after a now-brief four-year exile. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken is now headed to Israel, in part to renew ties with Palestinian leaders. The international community is now pledging funds to "rebuild Gaza."

When funds were being withheld from malign actors like Iran, the P.A. and Hamas, and financial incentives were being given to moderates in pursuit of normalization, peaceful conditions were prevailing. Now that the flow of funds has reversed, terrorism is back on the agenda.

9. Iran, Iran, Iran

Iran has played a key role in the current conflict. In the past several years, months and weeks Israel has been covertly striking Iranian nuclear infrastructure, attacking commercial vessels and striking Iranian-made weapons transferred into Syria. Iran has tried repeatedly to strike back, recently targeting Israeli commercial sea-bound vessels.

Despite recent Israeli airstrikes, Iran has already succeeded in stockpiling more than 150,000 rockets and missiles pointed at Israel by Hezbollah in Southern Lebanon. And unlike Hamas's rocket arsenal in Gaza, many of the missiles held by Hezbollah are long-range and precision-guided.

In a "victory speech," Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh publicly praised Iran for its support during the conflict, stating: "I cannot but thank those who brought forth money and weaponry to the valiant resistance, the Islamic Republic of Iran; who did not hold back with money, weapons and technical support. Thanks."

A recent report in The Wall Street Journal noted that Hamas rockets are made from Iranian designs, and Iranians have provided Hamas with additional assistance. Almost all malign activity in the Middle East today has Iranian fingerprints.

Iran is attempting to negotiate a return to the nuclear deal with the United States and Western powers. This just-ended conflict should give the West pause regarding Iranian ambitions. Tragically, it likely will not.

10. A Jew is a Jew is a Jew

Over the past several years, the American Jewish communal establishment has been increasingly critical of Israeli policies in private and in public. The community is overwhelmingly liberal and supportive of Democrats, and less religious than ever before. Many Jewish leaders jumped on board to support the #BlackLivesMatter movement.

Now that BLM appears to be siding with Palestinians, American Jews are being pushed into a choice. Side with BLM and Palestinians, or with Israel--the sole liberal democracy in a often-violent and illiberal region. Sadly, there are signals that many American Jews are not choosing Israel.

To those anti-Israel activists now wreaking havoc in Jewish communities across America, disappointing statements by American Jews alienating Israel may not matter. To the enemies of Israel, who are committing violent antisemitic acts at an alarming rate, a Jew is a Jew is a Jew.

Israel must do more to repair rifts with the American Jewish community and to fully activate those American Jews who stand proudly with the world's only Jewish state.