Moving Forward

Netanyahu Delivers for Israel

Dovid Efune

Israel Delivers for Netanyahu

After general elections in Israel on Tuesday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is now headed for a historic fifth term.

It’s a strong victory for Netanyahu in more ways than one. The veteran leader is now set to govern the Jewish state for longer than any other previous prime minister, including Israel’s founding father David Ben-Gurion.

While Netanyahu’s Likud party came in only one seat ahead of rival Benny Gantz’s Blue and White party, with 36 seats to 35, the result marks a 6 seat increase from the 30 seats he held in the outgoing government. Together with his traditional allies in the right-religious bloc, he’s set to form a ruling coalition with a comfortable 65 seat majority.

Also to Netanyahu’s advantage is the failure of two of his leading rivals on his right flank to pass the electoral threshold of 3.25% of the vote. The first, Moshe Feiglin of the Zehut party, once challenged Netanyahu for leadership of Likud. His strong “dictatorship.”

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Netanyahu h s play to bring the ultra-nationalist Otzma Yehudit party and its voters into the fold via a merger with the religious-right Jewish Home party also paid off. The combined Union of Right-Wing Parties won 5 seats in the election. His traditional allies in the Shas and Yahadut HaTorah religious parties also increased their Knesset representation to 8 and 7 seats respectively.

For Netanyahu’s critics, the results, and the likely makeup of the new government, will be presented as affirmation of what he long argued or least claimed, that Israel’s rapid descent into authoritarianism is gaining pace. Even on the heels of a hard fought democratic election, one Ha’aretz columnist went so far as to call Netanyahu’s Israel a “dictatorship.”

What the results really affirm, however, is that in Israel’s vibrant democracy the power remains firmly in the hands of the people. No amount of handwringing from media pundits or US Democratic presidential candidates could get the Israeli public to drop either Netanyahu or their elevation of national security above all other issues.

Netanyahu’s opponents attacked his character, highlighted the alleged but thin graft cases against him, accused him of divisiveness and even racism. They said it was time for change, but ultimately Netanyahu’s years of steadily navigating through a slew of complex security challenges as well as notable diplomatic achievements proved decisive.

He’s long spoken of the dangers of territorial concessions in exchange for peace. The land-for-peace formula is one many Israelis today see as simply impractical. He anticipated the long cold “warfare” that would form the backdrop to negotiations.

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Israel’s建国 leader, including Israel’s founding father David

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After years of holding President Obama’s designs for the Jewish state at bay, Netanyahu has delivered a slew of concrete victories for Israeli diplomacy through the warm ties he’s developed with President Trump. These include US recognition of the Golan Heights as Israeli territory and Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. There’s the diminished US funding for UNRWA and the Palestinian Authority, vocal opposition to Palestinian terror payments and the forthright advocacy for Israel at the United Nations.

It was these achievements that served as a central theme to Netanyahu’s reelection campaign. Giant billboards and flashy ad segments featured Netanyahu alongside other leading international figures with the slogan, “Netanyahu. In another league.”

For a nation that has so often stood alone, the prospect of continued momentum for Israel in the strongest diplomatic trajectory in history proved just too alluring for voters to pass up on a fifth Netanyahu term.

Netanyahu’s challenge in his next term will be managing expectations when the US rolls out its long awaited peace initiative. Perhaps he’ll be tempted to return the favor to President Trump, facing his own re-election, and try to somehow make a breakthrough peace deal work.

It will, however, be important for US negotiators to be cognizant of the new political reality. Israel has moved on from the failed old paradigms for peace discussions and its prime minister will be in a different position having the electoral backing of the voters — a rare distinction for any Middle East leader.

Dovid Efune is the editor-in-chief and CEO of The Algemeiner.

Netanyahu’s Fifth Mandate:

Boaz Bismuth

A Condemnation of Elitism

And it’s happening again: the pundits and the pollsters predict an end to the era of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu; the exit polls come out; and his rivals rush to make victory speeches, which a few hours later become history (how embarrassing.) And then, as former English soccer player Gary Lineker once said, “22 men chase a ball for 90 minutes and at the end, the Germans always win.” That’s how our Israeli electorate operates. After just a few hours, parties run in an election, and in the end, Netanyahu always wins.

Israel is a flourishing Jewish, democratic state that aspires to make it to the moon. But strangely, the same people who are concerned about its democratic character repeatedly find it difficult to accept the will of the people. Need we remember the words of Laborite Yitzhak Ben-Aharon, after the upheaval of 1977? By the way, this week for the umpteenth time also happened in the U.S. in the 2016 presidential election, which proves that sometimes we can do things before the Americans do.

The Israeli people are not masochists. They aren’t stupid, and they certainly aren’t a nation of primitives, as a formerly close friend, a doctor, wrote me a few days before the election. Her message made me very sad, because it proved that we haven’t learned enough about and that elitism is widespread in our society. Those same elites find it hard, even in 2019, to accept the fact that they have lost power and clinging to investigations and Israel’s imaginary racism to excise their entrenched opposition to Netanyahu. And how their hypocrisy has grown since the last election — all of a sudden, they miss Menachem Begin. I was a kid then, but I remember very well when they did to Begin back in the day.

The Left woke up battered and bruised, and that’s a shame. The Labor party, which when I was a child was bigger than any other party, turned into a footnote, whereas Meretz barely made it over the Netanyahu along with other important parties went astray. And here’s the problem: when the 20th Knesset passed the important nation-state law, which had the support of the vast majority of the people, the Left objected to it, arguing that it was racist because it did not include a clause of equal citizenship for all its citizens. It was obvious to most of the public that equality had no place in the law because this is not a country for all its citizens, but rather the Jewish state.

That is how the Left gave the Right another great gift, which the Left will pay for a lifetime. Unfortunately, I’m frightened of every kippa it sees within five minutes of Jerusalem or Bnei Brak and labels it as proof of the great achievements along with a consistent, well-ordered platform, the Left gets swept up in protest-voting for a party that has intentionally kept New York on the political margins. The only clear message was “Anyone but Bibi.” But in a difficult and complicated reality like ours, that hasn’t been enough for quite some time.

No one in Israel has a monopoly on either peace or security and defense. Israel Hayom journalist Avid Poryholes grew up on the same floor in the same building I did on Kedoshei Kahir Street in Holon. He admired Shimon Peres, whereas I admired Begin.
Who would have believed that the “Arab-loving” Peres would be remembered as the man responsible for Israel’s Dimona reactor, and Begin the “warmonger” would be remembered for making peace with Egypt? Right and Left, Right and Right – both sides have used it to prop up their own regimes for too long a time to be under Arab sovereignty, and rejected the resolution.

It is important to note two things first: the resolution was passed by the General Assembly and not by the Security Council under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, was advisory, not mandatory. And second, because the resolutions were never implemented, they became moot.

The British, exhausted after WWII and tired of the attacks against their occupation forces by both Jews and Arabs, ended the Mandate in May, 1948, and evacuated from the area. In a short period to build all the institutions required for a state – an army, an educational system, a labor federation, various state enterprises, and more – declared the independence of Israel on May 14, 1948, on the partition resolution. The Arabs, who could have done the same, did not do so. They redoubled their violent attacks on Jews. At the same time, the armies of five Arab nations invaded the area, intending to destroy Israel and take the land for themselves (and not to establish a state for the Palestinian Arabs!)

The war that followed ended with a cease-fire in 1949. The Arab nations would not agree to make a permanent peace or recognize the Jewish state, but they signed cease-fire agreements that demarcated the positions of their troops. These agreements explicitly stipulated that the cease-fire lines were not to be considered the border between Israel and the Gaza were occupied by Jordan and Egypt respectively, and in 1950 Jordan formally annexed the territory it had occupied and named it the “West Bank.” This is the first time that name was used to refer to what had previously been called “Judea and Samaria.”

The Arab invasion clearly violated the UN Charter, because it was an “infringement on or political independence” of the State of Israel, and therefore the annexation of Judea and Samaria was also illegal. Only Britain (and possibly Pakistan) recognized it. During the war and afterwards, Jordan illegally occupied East Jerusalem, the West Bank, Samaria, as well as Gaza.

In 1967 the Arabs again planned to destroy Israel, and some Arab leaders even made genocidal statements. Although it is true that Israel fired the first shots to defend the population of a town threatened by the legitimate military preemption of an imminent attack, and that Israel’s actions were justified self-defense. The war ended with Israel in possession of Judea and Samaria, as well as Gaza.

The argument is made that the UN charter forbids acquisition of territory by force. That is not correct. It says that:

All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations. *(Art. 2, Sec. 4)*

But it says fighting.

Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security. … *(Art. 51)*

If Israel’s actions in 1967 were legal, what is the status of Judea and Samaria? Many people say that it is a “settlement.” And this would be entirely legal, just as the allied occupation of Germany after WWII was legal. But if it is an occupation, whose territory is being occupied? Not Jordan’s, whose possession of it was illegal from the start.

The last entity in legitimate possession of Judea/Samaria was the British Mandate, which no longer exists. But the only national entity that could have been considered the inheritor of the Mandate’s boundaries is the State of Israel. Given also that the Mandate was intended for the purpose of establishing a national home for the Jewish people, and considering the well-documented claim of the Jewish people to be the aboriginal inhabitants of the land, it is reasonable to see the events of 1967 as the liberation of territory that was illegally occupied, and its return to the legitimate owner, Israel.

In 1988, King Hussein of Jordan relinquished his claim to Judea and Samaria, in favor of the PLO. But Jordan has never really conquered the territory to begin with, the gesture was meaningless.

It is true that the Palestinian Arabs wish to possess Judea and Samaria (not to mention Haifa and Tel Aviv), but that makes the legitimate claims of the rest of the world. In particular, the argument that settlements constitute a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, when its intent is to prevent transfer of population, the transfer of population is a “use of force against the territorial integrity of any state.”

In the case of Israel and the Palestinian Arabs, the “West Bank” is “Palestinian land” which Israel is occupying. The “West Bank” is “Palestinian land” which Israel is occupying. The “West Bank” is “Palestinian land” which Israel is occupying. The “West Bank” is “Palestinian land” which Israel is occupying.

PM Netanyahu’s promise to extend Israeli law to the former Ottoman territory to be held in trust by the British or the French in 1897, and considering the well-documented claim of the Jewish people to be the aboriginal inhabitants of the land.
unequivocal statement of intent just a few days prior to the April 9 election.

Last Saturday, Channel 12 interviewer, Rina Matzlah, fired an almost taunting question at Netanyahu, asking him why, given the fact that he had largely disavowed the Oslo Accords and a firmly supportive administration in Washington, he had not done more to extend Israeli sovereignty over Judea-Samaria. In response, the Prime Minister pointed to several precisely what he intended—to if reelected in the elections that were due to be held the following Tuesday.

Two-states increasingly unfeasible

Since the interview, the election results have come in, making it almost certain that Netanyahu will continue as prime minister and be tasked by the president to form the next government—putting him in a position to fulfill his pledge.

Moreover, election results gave an unambiguous victory to Netanyahu and the “Right-wing” block, it is still anyone’s guess as to how sincere he was in his statement of intention and how serious he will be about implementing it in practice. Be that as it may, the Netanyahus at this early stage several issues are already clear.

The prospect of any measure entailing the transfer of large tracts of Judea-Samaria to Palestinian-Arab control is becoming increasingly unfeasible. Indeed, as Netanyahu pointed out in his interview, the likely outcome of such an initiative would be the creation of a mega-Gaza—twenty times the scale of what has developed in the South.

Accordingly, there appears to be growing awareness of the dangers entailed in any such policy—especially over time. After all, even if some “genuine Palestinian-Arab peace partner” could be identified as being sufficiently acceptable to accommodate Israel’s minimal security concerns, and sufficient authority to enforce an agreement acceptable to Israel on a recalcitrant public, there is no guarantee that his hold on power could last. Clearly, once Israel relinquishes control over territory, it cannot determine who will seize the reins of power—as the 2007 Islamist take-over of Gaza starkly underscores—and the plant peace partner could be replaced—by the bulldozer.

In any case, the metaphorical successor—precisely because of the “perfidious” deal he cut with the infidel “Zionist entity”

Lethargic support for sovereignty in new coalition

But the election results also embody another message for the advocates of Jewish sovereignty. For they underscore just how tenuous reelying on elected politicians to promote and implement any initiative for the extension of Jewish sovereignty across the 1967 Green Line can be.

For despite an ostensibly robust showing by the “Right”, when one examines the composition of the emerging coalition, one can only conclude that extending sovereignty by the “Unified Right”: an amalgam of three factions, widely considered to be “ultra-right” religious Zionist parties, with four parliamentary seats. At the time of submitting this piece, neither the Religious Right (advocating extending Israeli sovereignty to Area C), nor Zehut (advocating Israeli sovereignty over all of Judea-Samaria) passed the minimal thresholds for election to the Knesset. So whatever their vote performance, both these parties clearly failed utterly

implausible to surmise that unless considerable pressure is exerted on him, he may, despite his continued support of Netanyahu, should he balk at...
Tasnim, there is no mention of Israel on April 9. But Press TV, the English language Iranian channel, has two articles focusing on Israel and the IRGC decision. One looks at Palestinian groups slamming the IRGC decision while the other argues that the decision is a result of the US and American regime’s anger over the elite military force’s power and success in foiling their plots in the region.

Following in Zarif’s footsteps, Defense Minister Amir Hatami praised the IRGC and condemned the US, saying “the Zionist regime,” Ayatollah Khamenei, speaking in Farsi and less interested in messaging to a Western audience, made a more clear argument in favor of the IRGC, noting that it had aided in the fight in Syria to support the Syrian government and that for this reason, the US and Israel are in danger. The argument was more reasonable, linking US opposition to the IRGC to a regional struggle between the US and Iran and their proxies and allies.

It is clear that Iran has sought out English media to simplify its argument about the IRGC decision. For instance, Zarif tweeted a second time with a screenshot of Israeli elections and a headline claiming that Trump labeled the IRGC a terrorist group at Netanyahu’s request. “Q.E.D.” tweeted Zarif, initials of a Latin phrase that are used to show that something you argued was correct. Zarif is trying to show off. He has also called the push for the designation a role of the “Netanyahu Firsters” who pushed for this regardless of “consequences for US forces in the region. They seek to drag US into a quagmire in his [Netanyahu’s] behalf.”

Zarif is being smart and tactful here, trying to create daylight between Netanyahu, Trump and Americans, by asserting that a conspiracy guides US foreign policy, as opposed to Trump being the IRGC decision. For instance, there is no recognition that Iran has targeted US troops in Iraq over the last two decades or that the IRGC has engaged in other activities. Instead, it is positioned as solely an Israeli issue.

Hamas also thinks it is an Israeli issue, quoting Zarif, according to Hamas statements, to “commissarise” with Iran. Zarif, of course, did not mention that Hamas has phone call, nor that Iran has been deeply involved in supporting Hamas and other Palestinian groups.

Seth Frantzman is The Jerusalem Post’s op-ed editor, a Writing Fellow at the Middle East Forum, and a founder of the Middle East Center for Reporting and Analysis. This didn’t happen in a vacuum. It happened because Shurat HaDin – The Israel Law Center – was behind it. The organization she heads has long worked to ensure that those who harm Jewish and Israeli interests pay a price — whether it be terrorists (she has won $1.6 billion in judgments against defendants including Iran, Syria, North Korea and Hamas), filing war-crimes charges against Palestinian officials in the International Criminal Court at The Hague, or other court cases worldwide.

Airbnb reversed their policies — and thanks are due, once again to Nitsana Darshan Leitner and the Israel Law Center staff.

In Other (Bad) News……... 3 Plots, 3 Synagogues, 3 Months

No idea that they might have been killed this year.

Daniel Greenfield

On Wednesday, April 3, FBI agents converged on a Bozeeman shooting range and took Fabjan Alameti into custody.

Alameti, an Albanian Muslim, had traveled from New York to Montana. “When the time will come for us to hunt them down, I will stand over them while I piece their bodies with hollow tips,” the Islamic terrorist had boasted in February. “Inshallah, we take as many kuffars (non-Muslims) with us.”

He had told a government informant back in January that his potential targets included military and government targets, as well as a “Jewish temple.”

Alameti’s terror plot back in January was the second such Islamic terrorist plot that month.

On February 25, Al-Ihab Tahab was discussing some of the targets he had scouted in Washington D.C. They included the White House, the Lincoln Memorial, and a specific synagogue.

In the middle of January, Tahab was arrested over in Georgia.

Taheb and Alameti had a number of similarities. Both men were twenty-one years old. Their terror plots were violent but scattershot. The range began with government building and ended with a synagogue.

There’s the second and third Islamic terror plots targeting Jewish synagogues in three months.

The trend began with Damon Joseph, a Muslim convicted of plotting to bomb a number of plots including one targeting a synagogue. Joseph’s inspiration was the Tree of Life Shooting.

“I admire what the guy did with the shooting, actually,” Joseph said, according to the FBI. “I can see in carrying out this type of operation inshallah.”

“We would pick a synagogue or place Jews gather, scope it out, find all exits and entrances,” the Ohio terror plot’s leader said.

He was also twenty-one years old.

All three Muslim terrorists were ISIS supporters. They were the same age and scattered around the country, from Montana to Georgia to Ohio. They operated in different but overlapping parts of the world. And yet their terror plots all targeted Jews.

What was it that created this cluster of three Islamic terror plots against synagogues? No specifics are given in the complaints. Even the names of the synagogues targeted by the three Muslim terror plots remain anonymous. The phenomenon surrounding the multiple Islamic terror plots.

Around the same time that these synagogue plots were being hatched, the ADL released a report that ignored Muslim violence against Jews. “Right-Wing Extremist Violence is Our Biggest Threat. The Media Can’t Lie,” ADL boss Jonathon Greenblatt had declared.

Three synagogue terror plots in three months would suggest that Greenblatt’s numbers are lying.

Last year, there was a similar cluster, not of attack plots, but of incitement to violence.

Last year, in the UK, Husnain Rashid was sent to prison for threats against everyone from Prince George to soccer stadiums, supermarkets, the British tabloids, and Jewish institutions. The details are fortunate, but the Jews remain a constant target of Islamic terrorism in Europe, America and the Middle East.

Even as the media emphasises Islamophobia, a new generation of Muslim terrorists isn’t waiting for a victim by Islamophobia. Similarly, the media blacklists the story of a cluster of Islamic anti-Semitic terror plots by shifting the focus to Islamophobia. The accusation of Islamophobia not only suppresses critics of Islamic terror and political Islam, but also suppresses coverage of the victims of Islamic bigotry and violence.

Jewish organizations have failed to address Islamic anti-Semitism. And that betrayal has left American Jews defenseless, not only against anti-Semitism, but rhetoric of Rep. Omar or of Islamic religious leaders in mosques across the country, but before a new wave of Islamic terrorist plots across America.

Few American Jews have any idea or have ever experienced the kind of anti-Semitic threat they might have died this year will go on supporting the Army and Jewish institutions. The details fluctuate, but it shelters congregants at convenient places where plots of secrecy may prevent copycat plots by other Islamic terrorists, but it shelters congregants at other Islamic places of worship, not only the Tree of Life.

The climactic period of Islam requires that Muslims exterminate the Jews. And that even the rocks and trees join in this genocide. Muslim clerics often cite this hadith. And in Montana, Georgia and Ohio, a new generation of Muslim terrorists aren’t waiting for a victim by Islamophobia.

The geographic diversity of these calls to violence in mosques from New Jersey to North Carolina, to Texas, echoed the diversity of the latest Islamic terror plots in Montana, Georgia and Ohio. There is no particular reason to think that the three terrorists were not planned for a year, or even two. What is remarkable is that the numbers reveal is the incredible scope and range of Islamic anti-Semitism and violence in America.

In recent weeks, the conversation around Islamic anti-Semitism has involved Rep. Ilhan Omar. Like the December purifying plot, and the first Russian politician reveals the diversity of Islamic anti-Semitism. What unites Muslim anti-Semites in America isn’t geography or culture. It isn’t a local Jewish population. Instead, as we saw in last year’s rash of anti-Semitic plots, it’s the religious teachings of Islam.

Only last fall, a Philly mosque had uploaded videos of an imam speaking anti-Semitism and reciting a hadith depicting the murder of Jews. It would be implausible to contend that rhetoric like this doesn’t influence anyone.

Apologists like to claim that there is a sharp dividing line between ISIS and Islam. The synagogue plot cluster and the mosque anti-Semitism cluster show that that comes at a cost. ISIS and anti-Semitism, it’s the religious teachings of Islam.

The media met Jewish protests over Rep. Omar’s anti-Semitic claim with one voice — silence. And yet their terror plots all targeted Jews.

The media suppressed coverage of the problem by not reporting on it and by changing the subject.

This isn’t happening in a vacuum. It happened because Shurat HaDin – The Israel Law Center – was behind it. The organization she heads has long worked to ensure that those who harm Jewish and Israeli interests pay a price — whether it be terrorists (she has won $1.6 billion in judgments against defendants including Iran, Syria, North Korea and Hamas), filing war-crimes charges against Palestinian officials in the International Criminal Court at The Hague, or other court cases worldwide.

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