

“AN EXPERT VIEW FROM ISRAEL”

Perspective 56

SUMMARY OF A **‘MIDDLE EAST FORUM’** WEBINAR 2 FEBRUARY 2022



In a brief ‘Webinar’ session organized by the Washington based MEF, Ashley Perry, an adviser to Israel's minister of foreign affairs and deputy prime minister in 2009-15, provides weekly updates on Israeli politics.

SUMMARY OF ASHLEY PERRY’S WEEKLY COMMENTS

- Perry’s comments on the latest developments in Israeli politics was confined this week to a few items starting with a wide-ranging media onslaught that was carried by Prime Minister Naftali Bennet (TV and newspaper interviews etc.) to highlight the achievements of his government in the past 6 months (especially in dealing with Covid).
- Naftali Bennet had been very vocal about his ‘right wing credential’ and in particular his outright defiance of Joe Biden in allowing for the establishment of a US Consulate in Jerusalem that would also be in a position of catering to Palestinian applicants.
- Apart from attacking Netanyahu, Bennet had been defiant of Iran, the Palestinians and any talks with Mahmoud Abbas.
- Bennet had also hinted about the possibility of creating a new ‘right-wing’ political party or camp that could challenge Likud by unifying his ‘Yamina’ Party with Gidon Saar’s ‘New Hope’ and Avigdor Lieberman’s ‘Israel Our Home’ party. However, this did not look doable at this time.
- Perry said that while Yamina and New Hope were currently doing very poorly in the polls, Lieberman’s party was doing well and as such it was unlikely for matter to proceed with him as matters stood.
- As for the opposition, Perry said that the so-called ‘Big Bang of Israeli politics’, namely the pleas bargain deal that was being discussed for Netanyahu had not worked out and that the matter was now closed.
- Perry noted that by the time a new Attorney General has been ensconced in position, at least several months will elapse. Hence, Netanyahu’s court cases would remain alive until further notice.
- According to Perry, with Netanyahu firmly in position as Head of Likud and the threat of the coalition dissolving no longer imminent, Israeli politics was back to where it was!

