

“AN EXPERT VIEW FROM ISRAEL”

Series Report #76



SUMMARY OF A ‘MIDDLE EAST FORUM’ WEBINAR



6 JULY 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 began his weekly comments by saying that the dramatic events of the past week had seen the ‘Dispersal of the Knesset’, the swearing in of a new Prime Minister and the announcement by the previous PM, Naftali Bennet that he would not be running for a seat in the next Knesset while having passed the leadership of the Yamina Party to Ayelet Shaked.
- Perry said that already campaigning has begun highlighted by negative messaging. At the same all parties had become engaged in testing the ground and seeing what kind of messaging could be most effective.
- Perry noted that Netanyahu having had a great previous week, was now being facing realities by being confronted with the difficulties attached to his renewed candidacy in wake of the corruption charged that are pending against him in court.
- Moreover, Netanyahu having chastised the outgoing Coalition for having worked with the Raam Party was subjected to comments by Mansour Abbas who said that the same terms he accepted from the Coalition were first offered to him by Netanyahu himself.
- Perry said that a key task before Netanyahu at this stage going into the November election was to try and moderate the language used by hardliners and “loud mouths” in Likud, especially since the ranks of his party was recently boosted by 20,000 young members.
- Perry concluded by saying a serious challenge to Netanyahu’s leadership of Likud in case of failure in the upcoming election was already being mounted by his arch-rival Moshe Gafni.
- In the Q&A section of his talk, Perry said that Russia had last week said that Israeli action in bombing certain targets in Syria had been illegal.

He said that while some of the bombings had taken place near Russian installations and personnel, the main reason for the Russian outcry had been a feeling that Lapid (unlike the previous PM, Bennet, who had played a more neutral position) was moving away from Israel's position of neutrality in Russia's ongoing war in favour of Ukraine.

- Finally, Perry also touched upon the new threat that had come from Hezbollah Drones that had been targeting Israeli offshore drilling for gas in the Mediterranean - a subject of dispute between Israel and Lebanon in which the US was playing the role of the mediator.

