

“ISRAEL INSIDER”

REPORT # **65**

SUMMARY OF A ‘MIDDLE EAST FORUM’ WEBINAR

13 APRIL 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 COMMENTS BY ASHLEY PERRY

- Suggesting that this has been “quite a week”, Ashley Perry focused most of his attention on the spate of the terrorist attacks of past 3 weeks which have so far left 14 Israelis dead and many more injured.
- He noted that in the last 10 days especially, there had been an average of 2 attacks per day with many more that have been foiled by the security forces and the IDF.
- These attacks are expected to reach a high point by the end of the current week that marks both the Jewish Passover and Easter.
- He made reference to the most recent case of an attack conducted by a Palestinian terrorist from the Jenin area that had taken place in the centre of Tel Aviv on a Thursday night which is ostensibly the busiest night of the week.
- Once the attack had happened, an unprecedented number of security forces, well in excess of 1000 people, had implemented a virtual shut down of the entire area while conducting a house-to-house searching for the terrorist.
- Ultimately, he was found in a mosque in the nearby village of Jafa that is adjacent to Tel Aviv and killed.
- While the terrorist’s father, himself a PLO retired official, referred to his son as a hero, the attack was condemned by Mahmoud Abbas (though his condemnation was worded elliptically to perhaps mean other things as well).
- Nonetheless, the terrorist action was supported by the likes of Hamas and many other Palestinian quarters including some Palestinian Authority officials.
- The PM, Naftali Bennet has now gone fully on the offensive in reaction to these attacks.

- This is at a time that the government is faced with serious problems in the wake of losing its majority in the Knesset the week before.
- The government's position is weak especially given that there is a possibility for seeing up to perhaps 3 more defections from the Yamina Party of the Naftali Bennet.
- The political situation will no doubt heat up once the Knesset has returned from its break in the month of May.
- In response to a question (by me) as to 'how the Israeli leadership is seeing the prolonged JCPOA talks', Perry said that Israel has been trying to take a back seat in these proceedings.
- However, while Iran was overplaying its hand, Israel was adamant that the Biden Administration should not give way on the question of removing the IRGC from the list of FTO - a view that has received the support of the most senior US military officer (i.e., the Chairman of the US Joint Chief of Staff).
- Fortunately, according to Perry, as Iran has moved away from the table the 5+1 have so far not given away any further concessions.

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