

Opinion Like Golda on Yom Kippur, Netanyahu Prepares to Fight Russia on All Fronts

The similarities between what Golda Meir faced in 73 – with Israel trapped between the two front of Syria and Egypt, both orchestrated by the Soviet Union – with the situation today are troubling.



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaks as he attends a state memorial ceremony for former Prime Minister Golda Meir at Mount Herzl cemetery in Jerusalem November 18, 2018. ~REUTERS/Ronen Zvulun

- U.S. takes on Iranian-Russian network, says it funneled funds to Syria, Hezbollah and Hamas
- Israel believes Gaza rockets result of power struggle between Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Iran
- Netanyahu beating war drums is about politics more than security

During the same week in which he managed to prevent his government from falling, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made time to attend a memorial ceremony for Golda Meir. Netanyahu lauded her brave stance during the 1973 Yom Kippur War. He also stressed her excellent ties with U.S. leaders, thanks to which America arranged an airlift of vital weaponry that enabled the Israel Defense Forces to turn defeat into victory.

In the same vein, later that day, he delivered his own Dunkirk speech. “We will overcome our enemies,” he said. “This will entail sacrifice, but with the strength of our spirit, we shall overcome our enemies.”

The opposition lambasted Netanyahu for exploiting national security to preserve his government, while Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman and Education Minister Naftali Bennett vied over the right to topple Hamas immediately after the elections. But there’s no guarantee that what Netanyahu meant was a war

against Hamas.

Rather, he might have been hinting at what would likely happen if Hamas falls: Islamic Jihad, Iran's protege, would enter the military and political vacuum and take over the Gaza Strip. That would be a black day, returning Israel to its situation during the Yom Kippur War - trapped between two fronts, Egypt and Syria, both of them orchestrated by the Soviet Union.

Two researchers from Hebrew University's Truman Institute, Dr. Isabella Ginor and Gideon Remez, have exposed the web of deception the Soviets created to surprise the IDF in 1973. The Soviets gave Egypt advanced missiles and pretended that the missiles were supplied because of "Israeli aggression." They pretended in international forums that they were trying to restrain the Egyptians, but in reality, they controlled all the preparations for war. And according to Ginor and Remez, they even planted a double agent who anesthetized Israel's top defense officials through reports of the expulsion of Soviet advisors from Egypt, without mentioning their return through the back door.

The similarities with the situation today are troubling. And they raise fears that today, too, the hands are the hands of Syria, Iran, Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad, but the voice is the voice of the Russian bear, which is trying to embroil Israel on two fronts - the north and the south. Therefore, it's important to pay close attention to the past year's chain of events.

In February, an Iranian drone was flown into Israel as bait. In response, Israeli fighter jets were scrambled to bomb Iranian targets in Syria. They ran into massive anti-aircraft fire, and one plane was downed over Israeli territory.

In September, Russia blamed Israel for the downing of a Russian spy plane, even though it was the Syrians who shot down the plane. It then exploited this accusation to upgrade the Syrian army's missile systems and the intelligence capabilities of Russian forces in Syria.

A week ago, in Gaza, an IDF force ran into a Hamas battalion in an incident that looks like a planned ambush. This incident was then exploited for aggressive missile fire at Israel from Gaza, which impeded efforts by Netanyahu and Hamas to achieve quiet via Egyptian mediation.

And now as then, the Israeli public is looking in the wrong direction. The left

accuses the government of not taking steps to ease the lives of Gaza residents, as if doing so would change the Russian and Iranian tactic of setting the south aflame. And the right is up in arms demanding that Hamas be destroyed, as if Islamic Jihad, Iran and Russia wouldn't replace it.

In the middle stands Netanyahu, who bears the whole weight of this burden on his shoulders. Did he feel betrayed when his defense minister, who previously served as foreign minister and was responsible in that capacity for the strategic relationship with Russia, suddenly deserted him, just when he was sure that everything was rosy in his relations with Vladimir Putin? Did he recall that he watched the World Cup from the VIP gallery in Sochi, yet now, he had to wait a long time for even a brief meeting with Putin in Paris? Does he suddenly understand how Golda Meir felt on the morning of Yom Kippur in 1973?

Perhaps that is what he was hinting at in his remarks to the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee on Monday about the need for another country's involvement in order to end Iran's activities in Syria. This was a first step, in which he acknowledged Israel's inability to escape the Russian trap and hinted at the need for American intervention. Just like Golda on Yom Kippur.



Mor Altshuler Haaretz Contributor

Send me email alerts

Source:

<https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-like-golda-on-yom-kippur-netanyahu-prepares-to-fight-russia-on-all-fronts-1.6677789>

[Disclaimer]