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**Eran Yashiv**

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Netanyahu is a 'bad deal' for Trump

One significant indication of Trump's stance was his success in coercing Netanyahu, against his will, into a hostage deal.



By Eran Yashiv — Published on 01-20-2025 14:28 — Last modified: 01-20-2025 18:29



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President-elect Donald Trump | Photo: AP/Alex Brandon

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Contrary to popular belief, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is an obstacle for United States President-elect Donald Trump. Trump's interests align with those of Israel itself, but not with those of Netanyahu. Trump would do well to rid himself of Netanyahu as soon as possible. However, in my estimation, he will only do so when it's too late. I am not a supporter of Trump, but I aim here to outline the map of interests and argue that Netanyahu is a "bad deal" for Trump.



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A clear interest for Trump is securing an agreement with Saudi Arabia, which would economically benefit the US and bolster its standing, particularly against China. Such a deal could enrich Trump, just as the Abraham Accords did, advance his candidacy for a Nobel Peace Prize, and benefit Israel.

However, the Saudis demand a framework for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Netanyahu, entangled with an arrest warrant by the ICC at The Hague and with extremist coalition partners, is not a viable partner for this endeavor. Typically, Netanyahu is attempting to mislead with empty proposals, as his envoy Ron Dermer has already been doing. Trump must avoid falling into this trap of deceit. Netanyahu has tied himself to the extreme, fanatical right-wing, and the Saudis are not to be duped.

Trump seeks calm in the Middle East to benefit the US economy, especially regarding oil prices and maritime trade. He does not want to pour money or deploy troops and aircraft to defend other countries. Netanyahu, however, operates in the opposite direction. He demands resources and prolongs conflicts. While Israel deserves support, its true benefit lies in ending wars, not extending them.

Trump views Netanyahu as a "loser," partly due to Netanyahu's behavior toward Biden, his responsibility for the [Oct. 7 massacre](#) after nurturing Hamas for 15 years, and his displays of obsequiousness. Trump no longer needs Netanyahu for electoral purposes, despises him, and considers him a liability.

One significant indication of Trump's stance was his success in coercing Netanyahu, against his will, into a hostage deal. At the moment of writing it looks like Netanyahu, over the coming weeks and months, will present plenty of obstacles and impediments to full implementation of the Trump ceasefire deal. Why would Trump need such a prime minister?

Despite all this, I do not expect Trump to part with Netanyahu immediately. The reason lies in the option of "neutralizing" Iran's nuclear program. It is likely that Trump would agree to a US-Israeli strike on Iran soon, while Iranian air defenses are almost non-existent, and Iran's regional allies are weakened.

This is a complex issue, and it is hard to predict Trump's exact actions. However, I anticipate he will pursue this path with Netanyahu. Over time, Trump will likely realize the significant risks involved. The US has bitter experience in Afghanistan and Iraq, where it ultimately failed to achieve its goals and incurred heavy human and financial costs.

From Trump's perspective, is there a viable alternative to Netanyahu? One option is Naftali Bennett as prime minister and Gadi Eizenkot as defense minister. Such a government, with young, dynamic right-wing leaders, would better align with both Israel and Trump's interests. If Trump truly seeks action against Iran, such a government would be more effective than Netanyahu's, whose government suffers from severely strained relations with the IDF leadership.

Regrettably, from the perspective of Israel's national interest, it is likely that Trump will first make these mistakes and only recognize them later. Perhaps too late.

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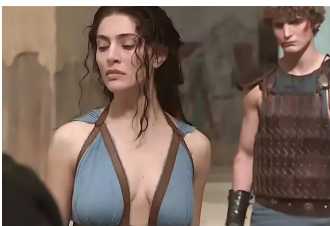
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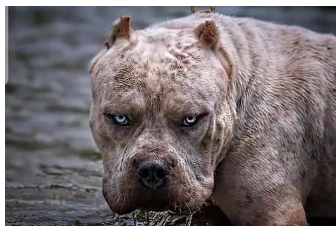
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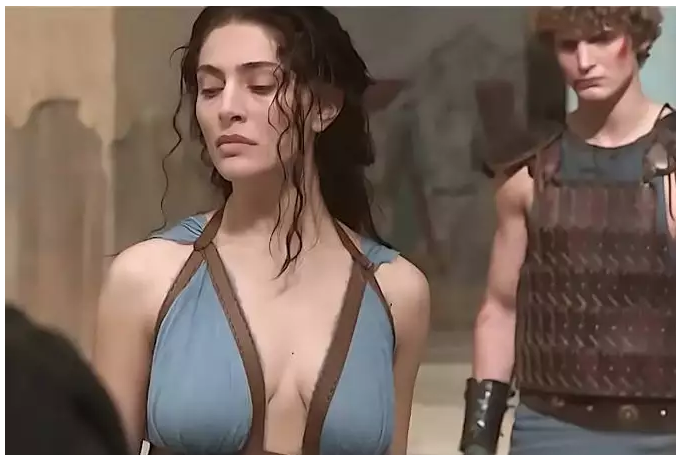
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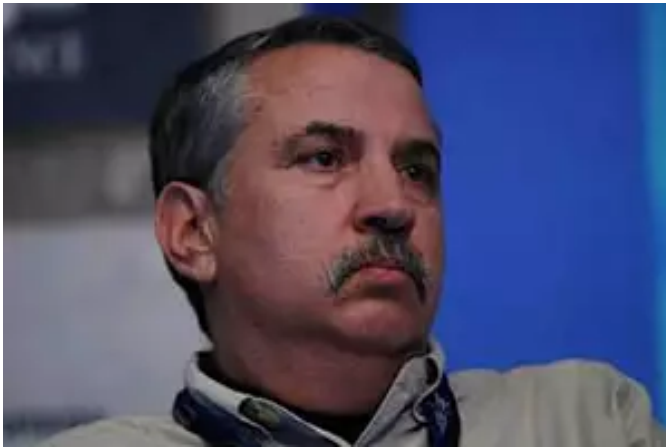
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