

GNITN - Special Edition

Israel At War – Day 276

Internal Strife

A House Divided

We should remember that the current Israel Defense Minister, Yoav Gallant and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have been known to disagree before the war began. Now, according to a report found on *The Jerusalem Post* we see that the two are not in agreement over the current hostage deal:

Defense Minister Yoav Gallant has already been fired by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in early 2023, before being unfired, and has been under threat of being fired several times since then.

Still, the Jerusalem Post understands that the break between Gallant and Netanyahu over the hostages deal is different to anything prior.

Gallant has disagreed with the PM on these specific issues before, during and after the war: *Previous disagreements between the two most powerful leaders in Israel today and which broke out in public in a chaotic way involved the judicial overhaul, how much or little to crackdown on IDF reservists threatening to quit over the overhaul, how much or little to draft haredim into the IDF, and whether to use some version of the Palestinian Authority to replace Hamas in Gaza.*

The current dispute is about releasing the hostages:

What is different now, the Post understands, is that Gallant is accusing Netanyahu of not indirectly, but rather directly endangering Israelis' - the hostages' - lives.

A lot of these differences were not made public, though. But the two differ on what ending the fighting really means:

...once Khan Yunis and Rafah were subdued, the Post has learned that Gallant stood with the majority of the IDF establishment whose message was there was no large organized Hamas force left to right, such that ending the war was not much of a concession to make to get back hostages.

According to this thinking, the five IDF reinvasions of parts of Gaza are large-scale "raids", similar to what the IDF routinely does in the West Bank, and are not really invasions.

So the “war” is over for all intents and purposes and agreeing to halt these “raids” is worth it to get the hostages back:

In a manner of speaking, Gallant and the IDF view the serious fighting stage of the war as already being over; regardless of what political slogans are running around about refusing to end the war.

According to Gallant then, this is the moment to get back as many hostages as possible.

Any delay or obfuscation or attempt to stiffen the terms of the deal now, according to Gallant, is a political move which directly and unnecessarily endangers the hostages' lives, the Post understands.

Gallant Is Not Alone

The *Post* article points out that the IDF overall agrees with Gallant:

This is also the view of the IDF high command who were stunned by Netanyahu's new conditions which he made public on Sunday night and which contradict significant aspects of the deal Israel had already nominally agreed to.

So was the PM playing politics with the so called “redlines?” The report poses that question with some thinking he’s not as hardline as he’s being portrayed:

It is possible that Netanyahu will agree to a hostage exchange and that this statement was just for public consumption.

Some also think that if his words are carefully parsed, that he left many openings for a deal.

For example, he said only that "armed" Hamas members could not return to northern Gaza, but said nothing about unarmed ones - a possible fiction created to claim that northern Gaza is disarmed, while allowing Hamas to return.

Gallant isn’t so sure:

But what bothers Gallant the most about Netanyahu's actions and statements - including his trying to connect the hostage deal to negotiations over haredim integrating into the IDF - is a realization that Netanyahu is possibly dead set against a final deal which returns all of the hostages.

Perhaps Netanyahu is angling for a partial deal:

If this is true, then the only question is whether Netanyahu at least wants a partial deal, something he slipped into admitting in a Channel 14 interview a couple of weeks ago - or whether he wants no deal so as to act as if the war is continuing, but to try to find a way to blame Hamas (not hard given they are a terror organization).

The article then offers an interesting take on his strong words:

This could mean Netanyahu's end game is to keep Hamas in power as long as he feels it is "weakened enough" and as long as he can keep ordering the IDF to launch raids which look like war to his critics on the Right.

In addition, this could buy time to push off elections and continue to change the subject from blaming him for October 7, along with the IDF and the rest of the defense establishment.

Do I think he’s just playing politics? I don’t think so, but it does make for a good story. Gallant doesn’t like any of it, though:

All of this is nothing short of revolting to Gallant, who was never much of a political animal, and who wanted to rout Hamas, but vehemently also wants to return all of the Israeli hostages or at least genuinely leave no stone unturned in the process of trying to achieve that.

What will the Defense Minister do next is something on people’s minds:

The next question then is whether Gallant would consider resigning if he believes that Netanyahu torpedoed the deal, and whether this threat could push Netanyahu to comply with the deal, at least long enough to get a first batch of hostages back in "Phase 1" of the proposed exchange.

Maybe Both Sides Are Playing Politics

We all know that political leaders feel the need to say things to stay in power and the United States responded to both the public statements from both Israel and Hamas intimating that what is really happening is something quite different. We find support for that notion in an [article](#) from *The Times Of Israel*:

The White House knocks recent public comments made by Israeli and Hamas leaders regarding the staged hostage release-ceasefire deal currently being negotiated.

“On both sides, you see public comments that aren’t necessarily fully reflective of the conversations that we’re having privately with them or their interlocutors,” National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby says during a briefing, without getting into specifics.

These comments were made after Netanyahu took a hard stance on what Israel wants:

Yesterday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s office issued a statement laying out his four non-negotiable demands, including one in which he claimed Israel would not accept any deal that does not allow it to resume fighting once it begins to be implemented.

The statement sparked a litany of criticism from those involved in the negotiations, including Israeli security officials.

And the US reply also followed Hamas comments about the Prime Ministers demands:

Earlier today, Hamas issued a statement claiming Netanyahu “continues to place more obstacles in front of the negotiations” that are jeopardizing their success.

Another US spokesperson added that it would be nice if all sides toned things down publicly:

Asked about the statement made yesterday by Netanyahu’s office at a subsequent press briefing, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller says, “We think it’s most productive to have these conversations in private, not in public.”

“Sometimes, [you’ve] seen the Israeli government make public statements. Sometimes you’ve seen Hamas make public statements. We’re going to hold the negotiations in private. What has not changed is that Israel, in its conversations with us, is saying that it is committed to the proposal that the president publicly outlined,” Miller says, referring to the Israeli offer that envisions a temporary ceasefire, which mediators hope can be turned into a permanent one.

Miller contends that behind close doors things are not any different, although the report interjects that Netanyahu’s comments match what he’s been saying all along:

“We do not believe that their substantive position has changed,” Miller says of the Israeli stance against the backdrop of Netanyahu’s comments, which would appear to amount to a rejection of the proposal that his own war cabinet approved in May.

From a Biblical standpoint I tend to feel that no agreement will be found unless Hamas agrees to surrender and release the hostages, something that’s really not in their plans. And Israel isn’t willing to let Hamas survive for what they did on October 7th. Whether public or private statements are a true assessment of the current state of the war, Israel will get to live in peace and safety when it’s all said and done. Hamas, Hezbollah, all of Iran’s proxies and even Iran itself still want Israel and all Jews to be killed. That’s not a good starting point for any negotiations.