

Gov't has lost control of West Bank and ability to act freely in Gaza and Lebanon

Amos Harel

Reading between the lines, it's possible that U.S. President Donald Trump is trying to hint to us that the war is over. Over the past few days, he has repeatedly spoken about increasing the economic pressure on Iran and continuing the naval blockade south of the Strait of Hormuz. At the moment, there is no mention of the threats he has so frequently made to liquidate Iran's leaders, destroy Persian civilization and send the country

back to the stone age. We've already learned the hard way that Trump frequently changes his mind. But one trend has remained fairly clear and constant for several months now: He isn't thrilled about resuming a full-scale war with Iran, and when necessary, he will strive to find an excuse for not doing so. Every time he has nev-

ertheless considered resuming military action, it happened because the Iranians left him no choice. In his view, their provocations and repeated violations of the memorandum of understanding signed in June pushed him to the wall and forced him to once again prove America's power. As the Gulf copes with an unstable arrangement that is neither an agreement nor war, Trump is also forcing Israel to exercise a degree of restraint in using force in

other theaters. In Lebanon, the ceasefire announced in mid-July has generally been kept, and direct diplomatic talks between diplomats and army officers from both countries are continuing under American auspices. The negotiations are over a plan that will include an Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon in exchange for gradual steps by Lebanon to disarm Hezbollah. In the Gaza Strip, the American demand is cur-

rently both more defined and more rigid. The administration seeks to advance the Board of Peace's 15-point plan for Gaza. It has therefore forbidden Israel to keep attacking the terrorists who participated in Hamas' massacre on October 7, 2023 and is pressuring it to prepare for a future withdrawal from Gaza and the reconstruction of civilian infrastructure in the territory it leaves. After a delay of more than a week, Prime Minis-

ter Benjamin Netanyahu officially announced that the plan is unacceptable to him and presented several reservations. But in practice, the Americans are continuing to advance the plan, and the White House is briefing journalists that it's aware of Netanyahu's political difficulties but is convinced that he will accept Washington's decree. Meanwhile, people working for the chairman of the Board of Peace, Nikolay Mladenov, have been making efforts to soften up senior members of Israel's Defense & Security Forum,

a right-wing forum of former members of the security services whose views frequently match those of Netanyahu. The relative quiet from many on the right, even though the government has de facto given up on the goal of total victory over Hamas, shows that things are more complicated than the way Netanyahu depicts them. That doesn't mean his Likud party has ceased its efforts to unnerve the public. On Tuesday, after a prolonged censorship ban was

Ex-Mossad chief: Israel was at Iran's Fordow site many times

Adi Hashmonai, Reuters and Haaretz

Former Mossad chief Yossi Cohen said Tuesday that Israel had "walked around" Iran's Fordow nuclear facility, where Tehran has stored part of its stockpile of enriched uranium, many times. Speaking at the Galilee Conference, Cohen said the U.S. bombing of the underground facility in June 2025 was "all of his dreams coming true," according to a statement issued by the conference.

Cohen also said that uranium enriched to 60 percent is "still far from" a nuclear bomb.

The United States struck Fordow last year during its war with Iran, along with Iran's other major nuclear facilities. President Donald Trump said afterward that the country's key nuclear enrichment sites had been "completely and totally obliterated."

But subsequent assessments indicated that the damage to Fordow was less extensive than Trump claimed. A senior U.S. official later told The New York Times that the strikes caused extensive damage to the underground facility but did not destroy it.

An Iranian official also told Reuters that most of the enriched uranium stored at Fordow had been moved to a secret location before the U.S. attack.

In October, International Atomic Energy Agency Director General Rafael Grossi said most of Iran's enriched uranium was believed to remain at known sites, primarily Fordow and Isfahan, although inspectors were unable to verify its location. The IAEA has estimated that Iran had more than 400 kilograms of uranium enriched to 60 percent.

A subsequent New York Times analysis of satellite imagery found that Iran had

Top judge slams removal of nursing home ballot boxes

Chen Maanit

Supreme Court President Isaac Amit said on Tuesday that the Knesset's decision not to set up ballot boxes in nursing homes ahead of October's election was a democratic "step backward" for the country, possibly limiting the tens of thousands of

Let all the elderly vote

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elderly Israelis from casting their ballots.

"The placing of polling places in nursing homes worked very well in past elections," Amit said while hearing petitions against the Knesset's decision along with Justices Ofer Grosskopf and Gila Canfy-Steinitz. "In contrast to the trend toward widening the phenomenon of double envelopes, this is the first time that the Knesset is taking a step backward,

about which we can all only feel regret."

The justices ruled the Knesset's Central Elections Committee must update by next week what voting options it offers for elderly Israelis to "exercise their democratic right" to vote.

The Knesset approved special polling places in nursing homes and assisted-living facilities during the last two elections due to COVID-19 restrictions. But last month, the Knesset's Constitution Committee decided not to extend the arrangement to the October 27 election. As a result, elderly people living in nursing homes, many of whom have limited mobility, may find it more difficult to vote, even though accessible polling places will be available.

Amit noted that the Central Elections Committee had recommended continuing the practice, but the Knesset committee rejected it. "We've heard talk that the number of elderly

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Israeli troops stationed in the village of Zawtar al-Charkiyah, Lebanon, on Tuesday.

Amnar Ammar/AFP

Once heroes of the left, hostages' families now eclipsed by politics

Ravit Hecht

Political history is littered with broken promises. But the one Democrats party chairman Yair Golan made – and then broke – to well-known hostage mother Einav Zangauker leaves an especially bitter taste.

During the turbulent months of protests demanding the return of the hostages, Zangauker, whose son Matan was held hostage in Gaza, was embraced by Israel's left and became one of the protest movement's most prominent figures.

She had all the ingredients of a compelling political story: a difficult socioeco-

omic background, a past as a Netanyahu supporter, fierce determination and unwavering commitment to her cause, and, above all, a willingness to confront the government without fear.

It was hardly surprising, then, that her name began circulating as a potential candidate for one of Israel's opposition parties.

In February, when the political establishment believed the crisis over the bill to exempt ultra-Orthodox men from the IDF draft could bring down the government and trigger an early election, Zangauker

was promised a guaranteed slot on the Democrats' Knesset slate. The party now describes that promise as merely a "declaration of intent."

It is impossible to know whether Zangauker would have run in the Democrats' primary without that guarantee. But she is right about one thing: The promise effectively prevented her from doing so.

So, what changed? The Democrats' slate filled up with candidates who, as party sources put it, "went all out in the primary" and had no intention of surrendering their places. Golan was pleased with the

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Minnesota and AIPAC

Group used as cudgel in Dem Senate primary



Eran Wolkowski

Jacob Israel De Haan, in Hebrew

The gay, Dutch, Jewish writer gets a new translation

haaretz.com

Loneliness before the digital age:

How ancient Rome invented the architecture of alienation

Terry Madenholm

For our ancestors, separation from the tribe often carried fatal consequences. A lone individual faced constant threats from predators, starvation and exposure to the elements. Through natural selection, loneliness evolved as a vital internal alarm, a biological warning that social bonds were weakening and survival was at risk. Like hunger or thirst, loneliness was nature's way of driving us back toward the safety of the group and for millennia, human societies were structured to answer that call.

From hunter-gatherer bands to agrarian villages, life was anchored in daily interdependence. Within these small communities, anonymity was nonexistent. Everyone knew one another – their families, histories, and roles. Relentless proximity came at the cost of privacy, but it also provided a powerful psychological anchor. Everyone had their place within the group, and no one disappeared unnoticed.

Over time, however, these small-group dynamics began to collapse under the weight of rapid urbanization.

Building to separate

Nowhere was this shift more dramatic than in ancient Rome. As the Republic expanded from a city into a



Top floors of an insula near the Capitulum in Rome.

Chube01/Wikimedia

vast empire, the very fabric of the human community underwent radical transformation.

Rome itself became the Western world's first cosmopolis, drawing hundreds of thousands into its densely packed capital. Displaced farmers, provincials seeking economic opportunities, and freedmen poured into the Eternal City, creating an unprecedented urban crush.

At its peak in the first and second centuries C.E., Rome is estimated to have had around a million inhabitants. For many, the sudden influx was likely psychologically

disorienting. Amid a sea of strangers, Romans both new and original became the first in the West to experience anonymity amidst the crowd – stripped of traditional kinship networks, and left profoundly isolated in the ancient world's first brush with modern alienation.

The city's architecture only deepened this sense of detachment.

Rome was built less on a human scale than as a visual projection of imperial authority and expansionist ambition. Monumental structures loomed over narrow, choking alleyways,

a deliberate design that reinforced the immensity of the Roman Empire and the insignificance of the individual. While wealthy elites could retreat to spacious, quiet domus, most Romans lived in cramped high-rise buildings called insulae.

These apartment blocks could reach up to 70 feet in height, the maximum allowed by Augustus' decree. Forced to live alongside strangers from across the empire in cramped and overcrowded conditions, residents may have regarded

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Trump and Netanyahu's feuds never lasted. This one might



Netanyahu, left, and President Trump last year. Alex Brandon/AP

Ben Samuels

For the majority of President Trump's political career, his relationship with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rested on the assumption that whatever disagreements emerged, their camps would ultimately fall into line. That assumption seems shakier by the day.

Netanyahu publicly rejected key elements of Trump's latest Gaza peace

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