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Lauder at Post conference

Israel is losing the information war

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El Niño looms

UN urges the world to get ready for extreme heat risk

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Good cause

Artist Helnwein to auction painting to help restore Vienna synagogue

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Coalition criticizes Netanyahu over Trump pressure

• By KESHET NEEV and DANYA SAPERSTEIN

Members within Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition sharply criticized Israel's decision to cancel strikes on Beirut at the urging of US President Donald Trump on Monday, calling on the premier to "say no" to Trump and strike in Lebanon with full force.

National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, a partner in Netanyahu's coalition, sharply criticized the move, stating that "This is the time to tell our friend, President Trump - 'no.'"

Addressing past remarks Netanyahu made, Ben-Gvir added: "You said that a strong prime minister tells the president of the United States 'yes' when possible, and 'no' when necessary.

"Now is the time to do what is required and necessary to strike Hezbollah, to unshackle our fighters, and to restore security to the North."

The criticism came after Trump said that Israel and

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Beirut spared as IDF strikes south Lebanon



SMOKE RISES after an Israeli airstrike in Nabatiya, Lebanon, yesterday. (Adri Salido/Getty Images)

• By MAYA GEBELLY and STEVEN SCHEER

BEIRUT/JERUSALEM (Reuters) - Israel kept up strikes on southern Lebanon on Tuesday, pressing its campaign against Hezbollah a day after US President Donald Trump asked Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu not to attack Beirut to avert further escalation in the three-month-old war.

Following Trump's intervention, Lebanon's government said Israel would refrain from carrying out threatened strikes on the Hezbollah-controlled southern suburbs of Beirut, while the group would halt attacks against Israel.

But the announcement has failed to reassure many Lebanese or halt the broader war in south Lebanon, which Netanyahu has vowed would continue. The din of an Israeli drone over Beirut kept residents on edge on Tuesday.

The Lebanese government has said it would seek to expand the ceasefire in talks with Israeli officials in Washington on Tuesday, the latest in a series of face-to-face meetings Beirut has attended despite Hezbollah objections.

Iran has demanded a Lebanon ceasefire as part of any wider deal with the US to end the three-month-old war that began with US and Israeli

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MOSSAD CHIEF ROMAN GOFMAN UPON ASSUMING ROLE:

'Iranian-Shi'ite axis suffered a tough blow'

• By YONAH JEREMY BOB

The Iranian Shi'ite axis has suffered a tough blow at the hands of the Mossad and Israel in the countries' recent wars, newly minted Mossad Director Roman Gofman said at his inauguration ceremony on Tuesday.

Gofman told the entire Mossad staff who were present at the ceremony, "You are the silent voice and the power of the State of Israel and of the Jewish nation. I enter with humility into this holy place, ready to rely on your knowledge and experience," which is better than gold.

He added that the strategic flip that Israel imposed on Iran and that undermined its plans to destroy the Jewish state has "altered the balance of power for the entire region."

However, he also said that



PRIME MINISTER Benjamin Netanyahu with newly minted Mossad Director Roman Gofman. (Mossad)

the Mossad's work to diminish the threat from Iran is far from over.

Gofman concluded that, during his term, the Mossad

will continue to act in the shadows to develop new capabilities and strategies that will surprise Israel's adversaries.

Prime Minister Benjamin

Netanyahu told Gofman at the ceremony that he will remove Iran's Islamic regime

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TOP DEFENSE SOURCES:

Iran war means greater Israeli influence among Arab states

• By YONAH JEREMY BOB

Despite a wide range of contradictory trends, Israel will have a larger influence in the region among Arab states after the Iran war, top Israeli defense sources said on Tuesday.

Among the contradictory trends cited by commentators have been that, at times, the Arab states seemingly want closer ties with Israel, seeing the power they can project by protecting Israel from Iran. At other times, however, the Arab states appear worried about the danger Iran poses or by the idea of Israel emerging as a regional dominator.

These contradictory trends could translate into either expanding the Abraham Accords to countries like Saudi Arabia, viewed as the crown jewel of normalization, or distancing Israel from cultivating further Arab normalization.

Top Israeli defense sources said that the picture would only become clear when the current war fully ends and the dust has settled.

However, these sources also pointed out that the various trends in the region go beyond views of Israel, given the UAE's exit from

the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), which was once an entirely unified and seemingly all-powerful force in the global energy sector.

The UAE and the Saudis are now in open conflict on a wide array of issues.

According to sources, this means that they disagree on handling Iran and their economic interests, and that their handling of relations with Israel is just one of many major disagreements on a long list.

Despite these disagreements, the defense sources remained confident that Israel's influence with Arab countries will grow after the war with Iran, including its defense sales to the region.

Sources also said that there is a clear paradigm shift in how future wars will be fought in the Middle East; most wars are expected take longer, in contrast to the past model of Israel winning quick and short wars.

To address this unique moment, Defense Ministry Director-General Amir Baram has recently made massive investments into

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Elections near as bill to dissolve Knesset passes first reading

• By KESHET NEEV

The coalition's bill to dissolve the Knesset passed its first reading in the plenum late on Monday night, with a large majority of 106 lawmakers in favor and none against, advancing the process of moving the election date up slightly from October 27.

The passage of the dissolution bill comes after a dispute between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition and the haredi (ultra-Orthodox) parties over the contentious draft bill.

The Knesset House Committee approved the dissolution bill for its first reading on Monday morning. No election date was set by the House Committee earlier in the day amid disagreements among lawmakers.

Instead, it was agreed to advance the dissolution bill to its first reading and to later finalize the date ahead of the bill's second and third readings. The panel agreed on a range of possible dates to move up the elections, from September 8 to October 20.

Coalition Whip Ofir Katz noted that these dates would not be limiting and that lawmakers would still be able to choose a different date outside that range later on if they decided to do so.

The coalition's bill to dissolve the Knesset passed its preliminary reading last week on Wednesday, with a large majority of 110 lawmakers in favor and none against.

The bill must still pass a total of two more readings in the plenum to come into effect.

The late-night vote in the plenum came after a group of lawmakers returned from a recent trip to New York, where they had marched in the Israel Parade.

The coalition's submission of its own dissolution bill has been viewed as a way for the prime minister to control the pace and timing of the elections, as it grants the government greater control over the

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Iran still silent as it studies deal to stop war

• By JANA CHOUKEIR and ISMAIL SHAKIL

DUBAI/WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Iran is reviewing a proposed agreement with the United States to halt their war, but it has not communicated with Washington for a few days, Iranian media reported on Tuesday, though US President Donald Trump said negotiations had been continuous.

Over three months after the US and Israel launched strikes against Iran, a shaky ceasefire is in place while the pivotal Strait of Hormuz remains largely shut to maritime traffic.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has not yet responded to a proposed final text of a temporary deal, and is taking a

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US PRESIDENT Donald Trump listens to members of his cabinet during a meeting in the Cabinet Room of the White House. (Win McNamee/Getty Images)