

# Netanyahu: Under Fire and on Trial

By Roger L Simon

People used to talk about how Bill Clinton was able to “compartmentalize,” go on with his presidential decision-making, during the highly-embarrassing Monica Lewinsky episode.

But that was nothing compared with what Benjamin Netanyahu has had to endure. The Israeli Prime Minister is on trial now, postponed for five years, while his country is fighting a seven-front war for its existence that is his role to manage and direct.



The hearing is taking place in an underground hall in the Tel Aviv-Jaffa Court for security reasons.

The nub of the trial, on which I am no expert, seems to revolve around two issues, one of which is what, from an American perspective, appears to be a piddling charge of corruption involving cigars and champagne.

Netanyahu, under interrogation Dec 10, acknowledged a penchant for cigars but claimed not even to like champagne, dismissing

the bribery implications.

The more significant charge is one of press interference in which it is alleged Netanyahu fixed some regulatory decisions that helped enrich a man named Shaul Elovitch in return for favorable coverage by the Walla news website for whose holding company Elovitch is majority stockholder.

This is, of course, disputed by Netanyahu's defense team but again, by American standards, after what we lived through in the corruption of the Pre-Musk Twitter by government intelligence agencies, the Russiagate scandal promulgated in virtual collusion with our mainstream media, including the New York Times and the Washington Post, and the head-spinning number of payoffs to backers funneled through Congress on a nearly daily basis, it doesn't sound like much.

But then Israel is a much smaller country.

What weighs more legitimately against Mr. Netanyahu is the open question of negligence in not foreseeing or preventing the Oct. 7 massacre by the Hamas terrorists. He is not on trial for that at the moment.

What weighs in his favor, however, is that perpetually-embattled Israel is emerging from this all in a remarkable position, arguably its best ever, under his leadership. He had already been credited with helping shepherd an originally abstemious socialist state into the thriving capitalist "Start-up Nation."

Dealing with the Biden administration in the aftermath of Oct 7, his government had to field a stream of mixed messages and demands for ceasefires that would have ensured the survival of Hamas, but as time went on, frustrated with the Biden ditherers, Israel, under Netanyahu's guidance, appears to have struck out on its own.

Especially since taking the offensive against their terrorist

enemies, nearly simultaneously doing away in a highly original manner with many high-ranking Hezbollah members through their pagers and eliminating their leadership, notably Hassan Nasrallah, Israel has been growing ascendant in the Middle East.

This, coupled with its successful attack on Iran, has helped precipitate a chain reaction with now Iran-client Syria imploding, its mass-murdering ophthalmologist/dictator Bashar Assad fleeing to Moscow, all to be replaced by a mash-up of jihadists of various persuasions with only one identifiable good guy, the Kurds.

In the midst of this, Mr. Netanyahu must have realized the biggest possible mistake would be to replicate Joe Biden's unbelievably bone-headed blunder in Afghanistan. Our president left \$80bn's worth of our weaponry in the hands of the Taliban, making that terrorist organization one of the most well-armed armies in the world and a big exporter of the latest high-tech weapons (ours), not to mention—to the Democrats' eternal shame—leaving Afghani women in a worse position than they ever were, now forbidden to go to medical school or even in many cases to have a doctor.

Mr. Netanyahu has done the reverse, ordering the destruction of as much of Bashar Assad's armaments as possible, including jet planes, naval boats, missiles, Russian anti-aircraft emplacements, chemical weapons, and so forth, so they don't fall into the hands of whatever entity comes next.

The Times of Israel reports:

“Following a major 48-hour bombing campaign in Syria, the Israel Defense Forces on Tuesday said it had destroyed most of the former Bashar al-Assad regime's strategic military capabilities, in an effort to prevent advanced weaponry from falling into the hands of hostile elements.

“In a statement, the IDF said that its Air Force and Navy had

carried out over 350 strikes against 'strategic targets' in Syria since the fall of the Assad regime over the weekend, taking out "most of the strategic weapons stockpiles in Syria."

"The military estimated that it had destroyed 70-80 percent of the former Assad regime's strategic military capabilities."

That's exactly what the U. S. should have done in Afghanistan, only we ran off, leaving our allies clinging to jumbo jets already a thousand feet in the air. Go figure.

You will find on the internet numerous complaints—many from UN representatives, of course—that that evil land of Israel has taken advantage and extended its border with Syria, including the frequently fought-over Mt. Hermon, to create a security zone.

Under similar circumstances, wouldn't you do the same? In fact, you'd be an imbecile not to, considering the history of what's out there.

Meanwhile, I suspect Mr. Netanyahu will remain prime minister, and Israel will survive and grow, probably as never before.

It's amusing to see that TIME has placed the Israeli prime minister on their short list for Person of the Year, along with (risibly) Kamala Harris, for one of the oddest pairings imaginable. We can be sure Mr. Netanyahu is thrilled he will be dealing with Donald Trump and not that woman.

Whether, like Churchill, he will suffer opprobrium from his compatriots after this war is yet to be seen. That no good deed goes unpunished often seems to be human nature. But for now Benjamin Netanyahu deserves more than his share of cigars.

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