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Returning to Israel, skeptical Netanyahu says Trump sees possible 'good deal' with Iran

PM insists any deal must address missiles, proxies; Trump: 'Very traumatic for Iran' if no deal reached; PM to skip Board of Peace meeting next week, miss AIPAC event

By [Lazar Berman](#) and [Jacob Magid](#)

12 February 2026, 10:51 pm

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Thursday that US President Donald Trump believes the Iranians could be forced to accept "a good deal," though the premier clarified that he is skeptical of the possibility.

"I have just concluded a short but important visit to Washington, during which I spoke with our great friend, President Trump," Netanyahu said on the tarmac at Joint Base Andrews in Maryland before boarding his aircraft to fly back to Israel. "We have a close, genuine, and open relationship."

Netanyahu said that the talks the previous day focused on Iran but also covered other issues, namely, Gaza. The meeting was the leaders' seventh since Trump returned to office last year. It came at a tense time in the Middle East, as the US president threatened to attack Iran over its brutal repression of anti-regime protests last month. Iran has said it would strike Israel and US targets in response.

The US has built up forces in the Middle East and is readying to send more, but it has also embarked on negotiations with Iran over the Islamic Republic's nuclear program.

"The president believes the Iranians already understand who they are dealing with," he said. "[Trump] [thinks](#) the conditions he is setting, combined with their understanding that they made a mistake last time by not reaching an agreement, could lead them to accept terms that would make it possible to achieve a good deal."

The prime minister clarified that he himself does "not hide my general skepticism about the possibility of reaching any agreement with Iran."

He said that he made it clear to the White House that any agreement "must include the components that are important to us, to Israel, and in my view also to the entire international community — not only the nuclear issue, but also ballistic missiles and Iran's regional proxies."

"This was another conversation with a great friend of Israel — a president like no other," Netanyahu said.

Also commenting on his meeting with Netanyahu and the state of the talks with Iran, Trump told reporters: "We have to make a deal, otherwise it's going to be very traumatic, very traumatic."

"I don't want that to happen, but we have to make a deal," Trump said. "This will be very traumatic for Iran if they don't make a deal."

Women walk past a ballistic missile launch vehicle in Tehran on February 11, 2026, during a rally marking the 47th anniversary of the 1979 Islamic revolution (AFP)

"They should have made a deal the first time. They got Midnight Hammer instead," Trump reiterated, referring to the June 2025 US strikes on Iran's nuclear program, which came in the middle of negotiations with Tehran.

"We had a very good meeting yesterday with Bibi Netanyahu, and he understands. But it's ultimately up to me," Trump said. "If the deal isn't a very fair deal and a very good deal with Iran, it's going to be a very difficult time for them."

A reporter appears to ask about a timeline for Iran to make a deal, and Trump responded, "I guess over the next month."

"They should agree very quickly," he added.

Netanyahu to skip Board of Peace meeting, miss AIPAC conference

Additionally, Netanyahu's office said Thursday that he will not fly back to the US next week as initially planned, which means he will not attend the Board of Peace's [inaugural meeting](#) on February 19.

He was initially scheduled to land in Washington on February 18 and stay the weekend before speaking at an AIPAC conference on February 22.

But a day after invitations to the Board of Peace meeting went out last Friday, Netanyahu's office announced that he would be moving up his trip to Washington to this week.

While the visit was framed as urgently needed to discuss the ongoing nuclear talks between the US and Iran, the timing led to speculation that Netanyahu was seeking to avoid attending the Board of Peace summit. The US initiative exposes him to criticism due to its internationalization of Israel's conflict with the Palestinians and its granting of a foothold to rival countries Turkey and Qatar in Gaza.

That speculation is effectively reinforced by Netanyahu's announcement that he won't be flying back to Washington and will instead be addressing the AIPAC conference virtually.



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (right) meets US Secretary of State Marco Rubio in Washington and joins the Board of Peace on February 11, 2025. (Avi Ohayon)

Netanyahu's decision may well upset Washington, which is hoping to have a strong turnout of world leaders at the first Board of Peace fundraising meeting.

While he will not attend the meeting, Netanyahu on Wednesday officially joined the Board of Peace with a signature during a meeting with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio. He was unable to attend the signing ceremony in Davos due to the international arrest warrant he faces. [https://www.timesofisrael.com/returning-to-israel-skeptical-netanyahu-says-trump-sees-possible-](https://www.timesofisrael.com/returning-to-israel-skeptical-netanyahu-says-trump-sees-possible-good-deal-with-iran/)

[good-deal-with-iran/](#)

US military preparing for potentially weeks-long Iran operations

"Sometimes you have to have fear. That's the only thing that really will get the situation taken care of," Trump said.



The world's largest aircraft carrier, the U.S. Navy nuclear-powered Ford-class aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) arrives in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, December 1, 2025.(photo credit: Seaman Abigail Reyes/U.S. Navy/Handout via REUTERS)ByREUTERSFEBRUARY 14, 2026 01:31

The [US military is preparing](#) for the possibility of sustained, weeks-long operations against Iran if [President Donald Trump](#) orders an attack, two US officials told *Reuters*, in what could become a far more serious conflict than previously seen between the countries.

The disclosure by officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitive nature of the planning, raises the stakes for the ongoing diplomacy between the United States and Iran.

US and Iranian diplomats held talks in [Oman](#) last week in an effort to revive diplomacy over Tehran's nuclear program, after Trump amassed military forces in the region, raising fears of new military action.

US officials said on Friday that the Pentagon was sending an additional aircraft carrier to the Middle East, adding thousands more troops, fighter aircraft, guided-missile destroyers, and other firepower capable of conducting attacks and defending against them.

Trump, speaking to US troops on Friday at a base in North Carolina, said it had "been difficult to make a deal" with Iran.

"Sometimes you have to have fear. That's the only thing that really will get the situation taken care of," Trump said.



US President

Donald Trump makes an announcement at the White House in Washington, D.C., U.S., February 12, 2026. (credit: REUTERS/JONATHAN ERNST)

Asked for comment on the preparations for a potentially sustained US military operation, White House spokesperson Anna Kelly said: "President Trump has all options on the table with regard to Iran."

"He listens to a variety of perspectives on any given issue, but makes the final decision based on what is best for our country and national security," Kelly said.

The Pentagon declined to comment.

The United States sent two aircraft carriers to the region last year when it carried out strikes against Iranian nuclear sites.

However, June's "Midnight Hammer" operation was essentially a one-off US attack, with stealth bombers flying from the United States to strike Iranian nuclear facilities. Iran staged a very limited retaliatory strike on a US base in [Qatar](#).

Risks increasing

The planning underway this time is more complex, the officials said.

In a sustained campaign, the US military could hit Iranian state and security facilities, not just nuclear infrastructure, one of the officials said. The official declined to provide specific details.

Experts say the risks to US forces would be far greater in such an operation against Iran, which boasts a formidable arsenal of missiles. Retaliatory Iranian strikes also increase the risk of a regional conflict.

The same official said the United States fully expected Iran to retaliate, leading to back-and-forth strikes and reprisals over a period of time.

The White House and Pentagon did not respond to questions about the risks of retaliation or regional conflict.

Trump has repeatedly threatened to bomb Iran over its nuclear and ballistic missile programs and crushing of internal dissent. On Thursday, he warned the alternative to a diplomatic solution would "be very traumatic, very traumatic."

Iran's Revolutionary Guards have warned that in case of strikes on Iranian territory, they could retaliate against any US military base.

The US maintains bases throughout the Middle East, including in Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, and Turkey.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met Trump for talks in Washington on Wednesday, saying that if an agreement with Iran were reached, "it must include the elements that are vital to Israel."

Iran has said it is prepared to discuss curbs on its nuclear program in exchange for lifting sanctions, but has ruled out linking the issue to missiles.

US military preparing for potentially weeks-long Iran operations

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The world's largest aircraft carrier, the U.S. Navy nuclear-powered Ford-class aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) arrives in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, December 1, 2025. (photo credit: Seaman Abigail Reyes/U.S. Navy/Handout via REUTERS) By REUTERS FEBRUARY 14, 2026 01:31

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Trump says Herzog should be 'ashamed of himself' for not pardoning Netanyahu

Israeli president notes he hasn't made decision and can't until Justice Ministry offers legal opinion; Trump claims Herzog not making move as he doesn't want to 'lose power,' without explaining

By [Jacob Magid](#)

Today, 1:34 am



US President Donald Trump (center) walks with President Isaac Herzog (left), and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at Ben Gurion Airport, October 13, 2025, near Tel Aviv. (AP/Evan Vucci)

US President Donald Trump said Thursday that President Isaac Herzog "should be ashamed of himself" for not granting a pardon to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is standing trial for alleged fraud, bribery and breach of trust.

Trump has been calling for Netanyahu to be pardoned since June 2025, but Monday was the first time he attacked Herzog for not granting one to the premier.

The comments came a day after Trump met Netanyahu in the White House, leading to speculation that the Israeli premier raised the issue during their sit-down.

Asked by reporters at the White House whether Netanyahu is responsible for the security failures that allowed Hamas's October 7, 2023, attack to unfold, Trump responded, "I guess everybody's responsible," before

noting that it was a “sneak attack” that “nobody else would have seen coming.”

He went on to again hail Netanyahu as “a very good wartime prime minister,” touting their joint successes against Iran before turning his aim to Herzog.

“You have a president [who] refused to give him a pardon... [He] should be ashamed of himself,” Trump said.



US President Donald Trump makes an announcement in the Roosevelt Room of the White House in Washington, DC on February 12, 2026. (Saul Loeb / AFP)

“The primary power he’s got is... to give pardons, and he’s not. He said he’s given it five different times, but he doesn’t want to do it because, I guess he loses his power,” Trump said, without elaborating or explaining.

“I think the people of Israel should really shame him. He’s disgraceful for not giving it,” the US president added.

Herzog’s office quickly responded, saying that — contrary to Trump’s claims — the Israeli president has not decided on

whether to grant Netanyahu a pardon.

This is because the matter is still being reviewed by the Justice Ministry, which has to provide a legal opinion before the president can make a decision, the statement from Herzog’s office said.



Katz/Pool)

“Only upon completion of that process will President Herzog consider the request in accordance with the law, the best interests of the State of Israel, guided by his conscience, and without any influence from external or internal pressures of any kind,” the statement added.

“President Herzog deeply appreciates President Trump for his significant contribution to the State of Israel and its security. Israel is a sovereign state governed by the rule of law,” the statement added, cautiously suggesting that Trump was trying to infringe on Israel’s sovereignty, while insisting that Herzog would not allow that to occur.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu arrives at the Tel Aviv District Court to testify in his criminal trial, January 27, 2025. (Yariv

While hosting Netanyahu in December, Trump claimed that he spoke with Herzog about the issue and that the Israeli president told him a pardon was “on its way.”

The claim was quickly denied by Herzog, who said the pair had not spoken recently and that no decision about a pardon had been made.

Herzog’s office said at the time that he spoke several weeks earlier with “a representative on behalf of President Trump, who inquired about the US president’s letter,” referring to a November letter Trump sent to Herzog formally urging him to pardon Netanyahu.

During that conversation, “an explanation was provided regarding the stage of the process in which the request currently stands, and that any decision on the matter will be made in accordance with the established

procedures,” Herzog’s office added.

Trump has waged a very public campaign on Netanyahu’s behalf, publicly urging Herzog to pardon the prime minister during a speech at the Knesset in October 2025.

Weeks later, Trump sent a letter to Herzog in which he formally made the request, dismissing the legal case against Netanyahu and insisting that pardoning him would unite the country.

Activists protest outside a court hearing in the trial of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Tel Aviv, calling not to grant him a pardon, December 1, 2025. (Chaim Goldberg/Flash90)



Herzog then reiterated that he could only consider a pardon if Netanyahu submits a request, leading the premier's lawyers to do so at the end of November in a filing that notably did not include any admission of guilt.

Speaking a day after receiving the request, Herzog said that he would handle it "in the most proper and precise way. I will consider only the good of the country and Israeli society."

While Herzog reportedly planned to decide on pardoning Netanyahu within weeks, urgency on the matter has appeared to wane.

Given that the trial is still ongoing, some legal experts argue that Herzog does not even have the authority to grant a pardon at this stage.

But the trial against Netanyahu has gone on for nearly six years and is expected to last several more, not including a likely appeal. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/trump-says-herzog-should-be-ashamed-of-himself-for-not-pardoning-netanyahu/>

'They will fire every missile': Israel braces for worst-case Iran scenario

With Arrow and David's Sling batteries, a large air and naval deployment and US interceptor systems, Israel is preparing to defend its home front if Iran talks collapse — including a scenario in which Tehran launches a massive missile barrage as a last resort, with possible international backing

Ron Crissy|12:45

As the diplomatic channel between the [United States](#) and [Iran](#) continues, Israel is preparing for war. Jerusalem's red lines are nowhere near Tehran's, which refuses even to consider limits on its missile program — the same missiles that caused destruction in Israel during the 12-day war.

For Iran, its ballistic missile program is not merely a weapons system but a supreme strategic asset, possibly even more important than its nuclear project, given its proven ability to paralyze Israel's home front and inflict significant damage despite advanced defense systems. Lessons from the war — in which Israel was forced to manage a "munitions economy" in the face of hundreds of launches, intercepting most of them yet still sustaining heavy damage — reinforced in Tehran the view that Israel is vulnerable to attrition attacks that could deplete its interceptor stockpiles.

Netanyahu and the US Secretary of State in Washington, this week

(Video: Omri Meron, GPO) [Go to website for video rdb](#)

Because Iran views its missile array as a primary tool of deterrence and decisive force, intelligence assessments conclude it will not relinquish it even under U.S. pressure in negotiations. That hard line places the region on what officials describe as a collision course — either signing an agreement that leaves Israel exposed to a significant threat, or sliding toward all-out war. In response, Israel's air defense system — composed of seven battalions deployed nationwide and built around five layers — is preparing alongside the U.S. military, and possibly an international coalition.

Worst-case scenario

Tal Inbar, a senior research fellow at the Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance, told ynet that Iran's launch capabilities have not changed significantly from previous attacks, though the regime still possesses dozens of heavier missiles that have not yet been used.

"We have not seen the capability for extremely massive fire — not many hundreds or thousands simultaneously," Inbar said. "But in a war in which the Iranian regime feels these are its final hours, it will fire everything it has. In such a case, one could imagine strikes even on symbolic targets that are not military."

He stressed that these are extreme scenarios. "One can assume that if the United States initiates the attack, there would be an operation designed to prevent as much as possible the use of these tools. The U.S. can do things Israel cannot, for example a barrage of hundreds of cruise missiles on various launch sites in Iran. These are things we have not seen before."

The U.S. 'large armada'

During the most recent confrontation with Iran, the Israel Defense Forces made extensive use of its defense systems. Reports last month claimed Prime Minister [Benjamin Netanyahu](#) asked President [Donald Trump](#) to delay a strike on Iran partly due to interceptor shortages. Since then, large American forces have arrived in the region, also to assist with interceptions — despite significant interceptor use in defending Israel in June last year and challenges in replenishing stockpiles.

Israel's air defense systems are undergoing tests, adjustments and upgrades to address evolving threats.

Still, U.S. assistance — providing a broader response to Iranian threats even far from Israeli territory — remains a critical component of the defense array.



The destroyer USS Spruance and the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (Photo: U.S. Navy)

As part of coordination between Israel and the United States, IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir made a secret visit to Washington about two weeks ago, following visits by Military Intelligence chief Maj. Gen. Shlomi Binder and Mossad chief David Barnea. Zamir met with Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Dan Caine for high-level strategic coordination. Senior American officials have also visited Israel, including U.S. Central Command chief Adm. Brad Cooper. The guided-

missile destroyer USS Delbert D. Black docked in Eilat and will continue operating in the Red Sea as part of what Trump described as a “large armada” sent to the region. The deployment includes the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln, the USS Gerald R. Ford en route to the Middle East and eight additional destroyers.

According to reports, at least 10 U.S. warships are now in the Middle East. The Lincoln carrier strike group includes the destroyers USS Michael Murphy, USS Frank E. Petersen Jr. and USS Spruance. Other destroyers in the region carry guided missiles capable of neutralizing aerial threats. The Wall Street Journal reported the United States has at least eight destroyers within range to shoot down Iranian missiles and drones: two near the Strait of Hormuz, three in the northern Arabian Sea, one in the Red Sea and two in the eastern Mediterranean.

Fox News identified additional vessels, including USS McFaul and USS Mitscher near the Strait of Hormuz, USS Delbert D. Black, and USS Roosevelt and USS Bulkeley in the eastern Mediterranean.

The Journal also reported that the United States is deploying an additional THAAD battery and Patriot systems at bases where its forces are stationed across the Middle East, including Jordan, Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Satellite images show an additional Patriot battery positioned at Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar, a primary U.S. base in the region that was targeted in Iran’s response to strikes on its nuclear facilities in June last year. THAAD systems can intercept ballistic missiles outside the atmosphere, while Patriot systems defend against lower-altitude, shorter-range threats.

Reports say the U.S. has also deployed three squadrons of F-15E fighter jets to Jordan, which could play a role in downing Iranian drones. Those aircraft carried out similar missions during Iran’s first direct attack on Israel in April 2024, in what the U.S. Air Force described as its largest aerial engagement with an adversary in more than 50 years. In addition, six Vermont Air National Guard F-35 jets were recently seen landing in the Azores after being moved from the Caribbean closer to the Middle East. Several U.S. Navy EA-18G Growler electronic warfare aircraft have also relocated from Puerto Rico to Spain in recent weeks.

International coalition expected to assist

During Iranian attacks in April and October 2024, several countries assisted in defending Israel by intercepting drones and missiles and sharing intelligence. The United States, Britain, France and Jordan helped thwart the April 2024 attack. According to the Journal, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and other Arab states also took part, quietly sharing intelligence and radar data.

Footage from David’s Sling tests

(Video: Defense Ministry Spokesperson’s Office) Go to website for video rdb

However, during Operation Rising Lion, the international coalition focused more on de-escalation efforts and preventing a broader war, playing a less active role in intercepting launches from Iran. With increased U.S. involvement — and its willingness to lead a strike rather than merely join one — questions remain about how that coalition would respond.

Inbar said past experience demonstrated the effectiveness of regional defense, beginning with detection capabilities largely based on U.S. space assets and the engagement of threats by friendly forces throughout the region. “The coalition and international defense were most evident in the April attack,” he said. “We did not see that in Operation Rising Lion aside from the Americans — and now we may see it again. There is no doubt that if missiles fly that Saudi Arabia or Abu Dhabi can intercept, they will do so.”

He added that in a future confrontation, energy facilities in the Gulf could also come under attack. “If there is a strike, this time they could target assets of value to Iran, such as oil and gas loading terminals or other energy infrastructure not previously attacked.”

First and second layers: accelerated Arrow production

In July last year, following heavy use of Arrow interceptors during the war with Iran, Defense Ministry Director General Maj. Gen. (res.) Amir Baram signed an order to significantly accelerate Arrow interceptor production at Israel Aerospace Industries. The system intercepts ballistic threats outside and at the edge of the atmosphere and defends Israel against long-range strategic threats. Officials describe it as among the world’s most advanced air defense systems.



about 1,200 kilometers (750 miles).

Arrow 3 – the first layer of defense (Photo: Defense Ministry Spokesperson’s Office)

The Arrow system includes two variants: Arrow 2 and Arrow 3. After long-range ballistic missile launches, the first defensive layer is Arrow 3, a two-stage interceptor that destroys targets at ranges of up to about 2,400 kilometers (1,500 miles) and altitudes of about 100 kilometers (62 miles) outside the atmosphere through direct impact. U.S. Navy SM-3 interceptors, deployed during Operation Rising Lion, can also intercept missiles inside and outside the atmosphere at ranges of up to



IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir during a visit to an Arrow battalion last month (Photo: IDF Spokesperson’s Unit)

Missiles that evade exo-atmospheric interception are handled by Arrow 2, the second layer, which intercepts long-range ballistic missiles within the atmosphere at altitudes of up to about 100 kilometers and ranges of up to about 1,500 kilometers. The U.S. THAAD system, if deployed in Israel, can also intercept such threats at altitudes of 100 to 150 kilometers and ranges of up to 300 kilometers, sometimes even during the missile’s boost phase.

Last month, Zamir visited an Arrow battalion, assessed readiness and led a drill simulating a missile attack on Israel.

Third layer: upgraded David’s Sling

Earlier this week, in light of existing and emerging threats, the Defense Ministry completed a series of tests on the David’s Sling air defense system, designed to intercept rockets, missiles, cruise missiles, aircraft and drones. Officials said the tests incorporated lessons from combat and included challenging scenarios.



The fourth layer of Israel’s air defense envelope – Iron Dome (Photo: IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, Nir Ben Yosef)

David’s Sling constitutes the third layer of Israel’s multilayered defense system, after the two Arrow layers. It intercepts medium-range missiles and heavy rockets at altitudes of about 15 to 70 kilometers (9 to 43 miles) and counters cruise missiles through direct impact within the atmosphere. During Operation Rising Lion, it also intercepted missile debris.

Defense officials described the successful tests as another technological and operational leap forward for a system that demonstrated high performance during the war, with successful interceptions that saved lives and prevented heavy damage.

Fourth layer: Iron Dome on land and at sea

The Iron Dome system, which continues to incorporate lessons from the 12-day war, is expected to play a central role in any future confrontation with Iran. It constitutes the fourth layer of Israel's air defense envelope and intercepts short-range rockets, missiles and mortars at altitudes of about 10 to 15 kilometers (6 to 9 miles). The system can also intercept threats aimed at populated areas or strategic sites, as well as missile debris and unmanned aircraft.

A battery commander in the 947th Iron Dome Battalion told ynet that current versions of the system have evolved significantly since Operation Rising Lion, with ongoing implementation of lessons learned in what she described as an arms race with Iran.

Alongside the land-based system, the Navy operates a sea-based Iron Dome variant deployed on Sa'ar 6 corvettes. Its first interception occurred in April 2024. The ships are also equipped with Barak missiles that intercept larger and more distant threats. The naval system is designed to protect offshore infrastructure, including gas platforms.

During Operation Rising Lion, another system, Barak MX, joined the defense effort and intercepted dozens of threats from Iran in its early days. The modular, multi-mission system provides sea-to-air and surface-to-air defense against aircraft, helicopters, drones, anti-ship missiles and cruise missiles. It was originally designed to protect naval vessels and strategic maritime assets.

Fifth layer: the laser that changes everything

Less than two months ago, at the end of 2025, Israel delivered for the first time its high-powered laser system, Iron Beam, adding it to David's Sling, Arrow, Iron Dome and the naval system, as well as Air Force fighter jets and helicopters that have also intercepted drones and cruise missiles.

Launch ceremony for the Iron Beam laser system, December last year

(Video: Defense Ministry Spokesperson's Office) [Go to website for video rdb](#)



The laser-based active defense system, Iron Beam (Photo: Defense Ministry Spokesperson's Office)

The Defense Ministry said the laser, developed over more than a decade, proved effective in extensive tests against various threats, successfully intercepting rockets, mortars and drones. Unlike previous systems, Iron Beam uses an advanced laser source and a unique electro-optical targeting system to intercept a wide range of targets with upgraded range, maximum precision and high efficiency at negligible marginal cost.

Originally known as "Magen Or" and earlier as "Iron Beam," the system is an Israeli laser-based active defense platform against short-range rockets, missiles and mortars, as well as aircraft, drones and gliders. Developed by Rafael Advanced Defense Systems in cooperation with Elbit Systems, it is considered groundbreaking and the first of its kind in the world. It forms the fifth layer of Israel's air defense array. <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/bjzv1cnp11e#autoplay>

Three men jailed in UK over Islamic State-inspired plot to kill hundreds of Jews

Walid Saadaoui, Bilel Saadaoui, and Amar Hussein were arrested and jailed for involvement in and knowledge of a terror plot to target the UK's Jewish population

By **GOLDIE KATZ** FEBRUARY 13, 2026 16:49 Updated: FEBRUARY 13, 2026 18:09



Walid Saadaoui, Bilel Saadaoui, and Amar Hussein were arrested and jailed for involvement in and knowledge of a terror plot to target the UK's Jewish population. (photo credit: Greater Manchester Police)

Three men were jailed for involvement and knowledge of a plot to kill hundreds in an Islamic State-inspired attack on the Jewish community in England, Greater Manchester Police (GMP) announced on Saturday.

The plot, if successful, would have been "one of the deadliest terrorist attacks to ever take place on UK soil," according to GMP Assistant Chief Constable Rob Potts.

Walid Saadaoui and Amar Hussein were both found guilty of preparing acts of terrorism after a trial at Preston Crown Court and were sentenced to minimum sentences of 37 and 26 years, respectively.

Saadaoui's younger brother, Bilel Saadaoui, was additionally found guilty of failing to disclose information about [acts of terrorism](#) and was sentenced to six years in prison.

According to GMP, Saadaoui masterminded the plot and recruited Hussein to participate.



Two assault rifles, a semi-automatic pistol, and nearly 200 rounds of ammunition were found in a vehicle when Walid Saadaoui was arrested. (credit: Greater Manchester Police)

Saadaoui, Hussein crafted plot through online communications

In late 2023, Saadaoui came into contact online with an individual he believed to be a fellow [extremist](#), and after multiple messages were exchanged between the two, "it soon became clear that Saadaoui was keen to conduct a significant terrorist attack targeting Jewish people," GMP stated.

Saadaoui believed the individual could help him import automatic firearms to use in the terrorist attack and began developing the plot, going so far as to "conduct reconnaissance around Upper Broughton in Salford" and visit the port through which they believed the weapons would be smuggled.

According to a BBC report, Saadaoui planned to obtain four AK-47 assault rifles, two handguns, and 900 rounds of

ammunition for the firearms.

The individual sought out by Saadaoui for help with the plot turned out to be an undercover agent who played a "crucial role" in foiling Saadaoui and Hussein's would-be terrorist attack, according to GMP.

Through Saadaoui's discussion of the plan with the undercover agent, it became clear to GMP that his younger brother knew about the planned attack, but remained silent, an action Potts stated "makes him as guilty as the others."

According to the BBC, Saadaoui was arrested by [counter-terrorism police](#) on May 8, 2024, in an operation with over 200 officers involved. He was apprehended in the parking lot of a hotel while attempting to collect the firearms he planned to use in the attack.

The BBC additionally reported that Saadaoui came to the attention of authorities when he began using social media accounts to spread Islamist extremist views. He used over ten accounts, none of which were created in his own name.

This is a developing story.

<https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/article-886575>

Netanyahu faces tight race against Bennett in upcoming elections, new poll finds

The poll also finds that 47% of Israelis do not believe Netanyahu's version of events regarding October 7. By contrast, 28% say they believe his account, while 25% say they don't want to know.

ByMOSHE COHENFEBRUARY 13, 2026 14:05



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Gal Hirsch, Coordinator for the Hostages and the Missing in the Prime Minister's Office hold a press conference at the Prime Minister's office in Jerusalem, January 27, 2026. (photo credit: NOAM REVKIN FENTON/POOL)

A new Maariv poll showed Israel's opposition bloc rising to 60 seats, tightening the political balance and intensifying competition ahead of the next election.

The survey pointed to a virtual dead heat in the race for prime minister between Benjamin Netanyahu and

Naftali Bennett. Netanyahu received 41% support, while Bennett trailed narrowly at 40%.

At the same time, Gadi Eisenkot boasted a notable gain, rising three seats to 12. [Bennett's](#) party dropped three seats to 21.

The poll was conducted by Lazar Research, headed by Dr. Menachem Lazar, in cooperation with Panel4All, following what it described as a turbulent week on the diplomatic and political front. Overall, the opposition bloc gained one seat, bringing its total to 60.

Most of this week's movement occurred within the opposition itself. Alongside [Eisenkot's](#) increase and Bennett's corresponding decline, Yesh Atid rose by two seats, while the Democrats lost one.



Former Israeli prime minister Naftali Bennett attends a conference at the Academic College in Tel Aviv, January 7, 2026. (credit: AVSHALOM SASSONI/FLASH90)

Amid an ongoing wave of murders and violence in Arab society, Hadash-Ta'al dropped one seat to five, while Ra'am maintained its current strength.

Netanyahu coalition bloc remains at 50 seats ahead of elections

On the coalition side, the bloc remained steady at 50 seats, unchanged from the previous poll. Within the coalition, Likud lost one seat, while Otzma Yehudit gained one.

The breakdown showed the coalition bloc at 50 seats, the opposition–[Bennett](#)–Eisenkot bloc at 60 (up from 59), and Hadash-Ta'al and Ra'am together at 10 (down from 11).

The survey also tested several head-to-head matchups for prime minister.

Bennett nearly matched Netanyahu, with 40% preferring him and 41% preferring Netanyahu.

Against Eisenkot, Netanyahu held a narrow advantage, with 42% choosing him versus 38% who prefer Eisenkot.

Netanyahu's lead widened against Avigdor Liberman, where he led 46% to 30%, and against Yair Lapid, where he led 47% to 30%.

The poll also found that 47% of Israelis do not believe Netanyahu's version of events regarding the chain of events that led to October 7. By contrast, 28% said they believe his account, while 25% said they do not know.

The survey was conducted on February 11–12 among 593 respondents, representing a sample of Israel's adult population aged 18 and over, both Jewish and Arab. The maximum margin of error is 4%.

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/politics-and-diplomacy/article-886571>

'Fraud is a real risk': Court gives election integrity supporters huge victory

By [Bob Unruh](#)

[February 13, 2026](#)

A ballot harvester in Georgia.



A three-judge panel on the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has given a huge victory to election integrity supporters.

Its ruling said Texas is allowed to ban paid political vote harvesting.

"The Supreme Court has long recognized that 'a state has a compelling interest in protecting voters from confusion and undue influence' and in 'ensuring that an individual's right to vote is not undermined by fraud in the election process,'" the opinion said. "These compelling

interests in election security are heightened for mail-in voting because 'vote buying schemes are far more difficult to detect when citizens vote by mail' and 'fraud is a real risk that accompanies mail-in voting.'"

According to a [report](#) from Courthousenews, "The panel also found that the law does not violate the First Amendment, as it regulates 'the mechanics of the electoral process' and that, even if that was not the case, the ban is justified by the need to protect the integrity of the voting process."

A lower court judge had incorrectly blocked the Texas law that was adopted in 2021 amid the scandals that erupted during Joe Biden's 2020 victory over President Donald Trump.

That election was the subject to multiple undue influences, including the \$400 million plus Mark Zuckerberg handed out to various local elections officials who often used it to recruit Democrats, and the FBI's decision to interfere in the vote by claiming, falsely, that the scandals about the Biden family uncovered in an abandoned laptop computer were Russian disinformation.

The law banned canvassers from getting pay or any other benefit for "vote harvesting services."

Violations were a felony punishable by up to 10 years in prison and a fine of up to \$10,000.

Harvesting scheme supporters claimed the law would force them to change their political efforts so they wouldn't accidentally violate the law.

It was Xavier Rodriguez, a judge in the state's western district, who halted enforcement of the law.

The appeals ruling criticized him for "vague hypotheticals," and said, "In contrast to this judicial myopia, ordinary citizens serving on a jury 'should be capable of understanding' this statute's 'common-sense core of meaning,'" the ruling said.

The 5th Circuit has UPHeld a Texas law that criminalizes paid in-person ballot harvesting, reversing a district court injunction and allowing the law to take effect. [pic.twitter.com/qP5jLQWpx](https://twitter.com/qP5jLQWpx)

— SCOTUS Wire (@scotus_wire) [February 12, 2026](#)

Attorney General Ken Paxton Secures Landmark Legal Victory to Ban Ballot Harvesting in Texas and Protect Election Integrity: <https://t.co/qxmuRQbZ8N>

— Texas Attorney General (@TXAG) [February 13, 2026](#)

This is what illegal Ballot Harvesting looked like in Georgia. Harvesters were paid per ballot – this criminal was kind enough to drop off his ballots in broad daylight. And we have the video...<https://t.co/bJFUK4ya6q>
[pic.twitter.com/bJFUK4ya6q](https://t.co/bJFUK4ya6q)

— United Tea Party GA (@UTPGA) [January 28, 2022](#)

President Trump joined the conversation about election integrity also on Friday, explaining, "The Democrats refuse to vote for Voter I.D., or Citizenship. The reason is very simple — They want to continue to cheat in Elections.

"This was not what our Founders desired. I have searched the depths of Legal Arguments not yet articulated or vetted on this subject, and will be presenting an irrefutable one in the very near future. There will be Voter I.D. for the Midterm Elections, whether approved by Congress or not! Also, the People of our Country are insisting on Citizenship, and No Mail-In Ballots, with exceptions for Military, Disability, Illness, or Travel. Thank you for your attention to this matter! PRESIDENT DONALD J. TRUMP," he wrote.

[pic.twitter.com/rl3iJkQp4E](https://twitter.com/rl3iJkQp4E)

— Rapid Response 47 (@RapidResponse47) [February 13, 2026](#)

<https://www.wnd.com/2026/02/fraud-is-real-risk-court-gives-election-integrity/>

OP ED

Trump, Like Eisenhower, Solves Problems by First Making Them Bigger

by [J.B. Shurk](#)

February 13, 2026 at 5:00 am



What his critics miss is President Donald Trump's rather unique set of problem-solving skills that allow him to tackle complex problems in unorthodox ways.

Pictured: Trump speaks during an event in the White House on February 12, 2026. (Photo by Anna Money maker/Getty Images)

President Dwight D. Eisenhower made an important observation about finding answers to difficult questions. "Whenever I run into a problem I can't solve," the five-star general reportedly [remarked](#), "I always make it bigger. I can never solve it by trying to make it smaller, but if I make it big enough, I can begin to see the outlines of a solution."

As an example, as Europe's first Supreme Allied Commander, Eisenhower suggested that a problem resupplying troops in Italy might be about much more than simple logistics. A problem-solver must consider the wider map and examine how convoy movements in northern Europe affect supply distribution in the South, whether resources for the whole continent are being allocated efficiently, and whether leadership decisions a thousand miles away might be a more pressing problem than finding enough

mechanics to fix run-down trucks stuck in the mud.

Eisenhower's [principle](#) has been passed down over time: "If a problem cannot be solved, enlarge it."

Interestingly, this same principle aptly captures the governing style of President Donald J. Trump. The president became a famous public figure many decades ago partly because of his penchant for going "bigly". He transformed dilapidated properties into prime real estate. He adorned building entrances in marble, crystal, and gold. He acquired historic architectural achievements and placed the Trump name atop them in bright lights for the whole world to see. Both in his real estate and reality television careers, Trump has long had a reputation for being bold, self-promoting, pugnacious, and ostentatious.

For his critics, showmanship and braggadocio are the limits of Trump's "bigness." They see a man who enjoys flattery, celebrity, and the sight of his own name towering high above city lights. What those critics miss is Trump's rather unique set of problem-solving skills that allow him to tackle complex problems in unorthodox ways.

Peace in Gaza. Peace in Ukraine. U.S. energy independence. U.S. trade parity with the rest of the world. Enhanced partnerships with Japan. Economic collaboration with Russia. Economic decoupling from China. Border walls. Immigration enforcement. Military supremacy. Technological superiority. Free speech. Nationalism. Panama. Venezuela. Cuba. Iran. Greenland. The list goes on and on. Although these might first appear as unrelated subjects, every single one is inextricably connected to the rest. Rather than treating them as distinct problems that must be navigated one at a time, Trump looks at them as valuable pieces of property on one *big* game board.

While the president makes nice with China's Xi Jinping and talks publicly about how China and the United States are economically tied together for the foreseeable future, he simultaneously destroys China's [investments](#) in Panama and [energy partnerships](#) in Venezuela and Iran. While the president sends emissaries Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin and his representatives, he secures a strategic trade deal with Indian President Narendra Modi that could end India's importation of [Russian oil](#).

While Trump is pushing Putin to halt his ongoing military offensive in Ukraine, Trump is [threatening](#) Russia's strategic partnership with Cuba by [cutting off](#) critical energy supplies to the communist island nation. While the president assures NATO allies that the American military is prepared to defend Europe from any perceived Russian threats, he also funds [free speech initiatives](#) to counter Europe's online censorship, maneuvers around Europe's "coalition of the willing" to [negotiate an end](#) to the war in Ukraine directly with Putin, and [threatens](#) European countries that get in the way of the United States's eventual [acquisition of Greenland](#).

While Trump [withdraws](#) the U.S. from 31 United Nations entities and 35 other international organizations dedicated to "climate," "peace," and "social justice," he lays the foundations for a [Board of Peace](#) that might not only bring some stability to the Gaza Strip but also eventually supersede the UN as the most important institutional body working for broad international cooperation and lasting peace.

When Trump first introduced the framework for a Board of Peace to end bloodshed between Israel and Hamas, few could have guessed that he would use that framework as a hook for creating a potentially more consequential organization. By inviting [geopolitical adversaries](#) such as Putin and Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko to join this incipient board, Trump is not only creating a new global institution but also forging partnerships among foes. By ensuring that everybody has "skin in the game," Trump seems to hope that national self-interest will promote regional stability.

When Trump first declared that he would achieve peace in Ukraine, few could have guessed that he might seek economic cooperation with Russia or set his sights on the islands of Greenland and Cuba as part of a "carrot and stick" approach for keeping both the European Council and Russia motivated to end the fighting. When the president signaled to the world that the United States would do whatever it could to avoid direct military confrontation with China, few could have guessed that he would cut off China's expanding tentacles in South and Central America and the Middle East. While returning America's focus to the Western Hemisphere and rededicating American resolve to upholding the Monroe Doctrine, Trump uses that focus and resolve to weaken both China and Russia. In addition, while focusing on security in the Western Hemisphere, he strengthens economic and military alliances with Israel, India, and Japan — indispensable allies whose help will be critical in containing Russia, China, and Iran.

Trump's critics see a distracted and mercurial mind unwilling to stay on subject. They portray him as an emotional loose cannon temperamentally unsuited for the obligations of his office. What they ignore is how much Trump relishes manufacturing and churning out chaos. For a man constantly in the public eye — especially a man whom the assorted members of the corporate news media love to hate — the appearance of chaos provides a cover of thick fog that keeps his enemies off balance and his critics guessing. This frenetic style represents a

marked departure from typical White House operations of the past.

At least since the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt, White House staffs have prepared carefully tailored public messages. Communications experts occupy an entire suite of West Wing offices because their role in the modern political world is considered critical. For decades, those experts guided presidents how best to repeat important messages *ad nauseam* and how dexterously to minimize distractions.

President Lyndon B. Johnson's White House imprinted the "War on Poverty" upon Americans' minds. President Ronald W. Reagan's White House convinced Americans of the importance of the nation's "War on Drugs." Under President Barack H. Obama, White House staff fed young reporters a steady diet of stories on the virtues of Obamacare and the Iran "nuclear deal," while dismissing questions or concerns about most anything else. For modern White House staffs, staying "on message" is a "golden rule" for effective public communication.

Trump has his own "golden rules". He prefers to flood the media landscape with many subjects, themes, distractions, and objectives all at once. He might start the day with a message on his Truth Social platform [warning](#) Iran not to kill protesters in the streets of Tehran. Minutes later, he could point out to reporters that the U.S. Navy has "quarantined" vital shipping lanes around Cuba. While walking to Marine One, he might field 20 questions on the White House lawn about diverse, unrelated, and even contradictory subjects, including: why he should have been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, why he might be forced to attack Iran, if he will join NATO partners in providing security guarantees in post-war Ukraine, and whether he will ignore the concerns of NATO partners and seize Greenland for the United States. Like a skilled juggler impressing his audience with how many lit Molotov cocktails, revving chainsaws, and live grenades he can keep in the air all at once, Trump makes it supremely difficult for any member of the press corps to prioritize one newsworthy story over the rest.

There is tremendous value in Trump's smorgasbord communication strategy. First, by discussing so many topics that are newsworthy, provocative, and important to the American people, the president prevents his fiercest critics in the press from focusing Americans' attention on any one story. A cable news channel that wishes to paint the president's capture of Venezuela's Nicolás Maduro as reckless or illegal finds it difficult to convince the American people of that thesis when Trump has already turned his sights toward Cuba, Iran, and Greenland. As much as any single reporter or news publication might prefer to highlight the broader issues related to any one White House policy, only so much time can be allocated to discrete stories when Trump is making news half a dozen times each day.

Second, by being an agent of chaos or the juggler-in-chief extraordinaire, Trump makes it clear that he alone decides executive policy. White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt plays a major role in faithfully articulating the president's daily messages, but nobody doubts that it is *Trump's* message being communicated. By affording the press so much personal interaction, Trump really is his own press secretary. The whole communications staff in the White House takes its cues from him, and those trusted staff members adjust their words to amplify his message accordingly. Anyone watching events unfolding on a video screen — whether a lawmaker on Capitol Hill, a prime minister in a foreign capital, a foreign national protesting his country's own rulers, or an ordinary American citizen at home — knows that "the buck stops with Trump" at all times.

Lastly, Trump's machine-gun fire approach to communication keeps America's competitors, adversaries, and enemies on their back feet. During the 2024 presidential campaign, Trump repeatedly promised that he would aggressively use tariffs to recalibrate America's trade position in the world. Prominent executives at Wall Street firms, members of European parliaments, and foreign heads of state disparaged Trump's plans and assured the public that they would never come to fruition. Nevertheless, in 2025, Trump and his economic advisors applied tariff leverage against both economic allies and foes to [reorient the global system of trade](#) toward America's advantage.

Seven and a half years ago, the German delegation to the UN General Assembly appeared to laugh at Trump when he [suggested](#) that they would regret being so dependent upon Russian energy. After Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine and the sabotage of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline used to transport natural gas from Russia to Germany, however, Europe's disregard for Trump's blunt warning proved to be hubristically dimwitted.

Similarly, when Trump publicly expressed interest in purchasing Greenland from Denmark back in 2019, Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen [dismissed](#) Trump's offer as "absurd." Many Danish and European Union politicians scoffed at the notion, as well. Nobody doubts the seriousness of Trump's words today.

Late last spring, Trump repeatedly warned Iran's leaders to negotiate faithfully with the United States concerning the operation of its key nuclear enrichment facilities. When Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and President Masoud Pezeshkian dismissed Trump's warnings as bluster, America's commander-in-chief sent stealth

bombers into Iran and dropped "bunker buster" bombs on Iran's most important nuclear facilities just a few days into summer.

When the illegitimate Venezuelan president, Nicolás Maduro, refused Trump's offer of exile, America's elite Delta Force operators crashed through Maduro's fortress stronghold and flew the tyrant to New York to face a range of narco-terrorism charges in court.

In 2026, political and economic leaders around the world hang on Trump's every word. They know what he says shifts the direction of stock markets. They know his warnings are prescient. They know both his promises and threats are real. They also know that the president is willing to do unconventional things to achieve success for the United States. He is willing to offer friendship to enemies, and he is willing to handle friends sternly. He is capable of looking at protracted conflicts from many different angles. He is willing to throw out the customary playbooks and play by his own rules.

When necessary, Trump is quite comfortable employing the Eisenhower Principle by first making problems *much bigger* before their ultimate solutions come into clear focus. Then, when those solutions do appear, Trump swiftly acts.

JB Shurk writes about politics and society, and is a Gatestone Institute Distinguished Senior Fellow.

<https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/22266/trump-eisenhower-principle>



BS"D

STEP BY STEP

STEP BY STEP: Good news is that many friends and supporters of Lev U'Neshama (Heart and Soul) donated towards the Education Fund project to provide basic school supplies for actually 350 children within our Lev U'Neshama families.

We are grateful that the school supply part of our effort has been successful.

According to the Israel Population and Statistics office, Tzfat's population is about 40,000, and one third live at the poverty level. We do what we can so at least the children within our struggling LUN families can get the things they need.

Every week we are providing new sport shoes and eye exams/eyeglasses to the children on our request list. However, previous donations are rapidly dwindling. I am reaching out now before the fund has been emptied and we will have to say "no" to additional requests.

We work with two local shoe merchants who give Lev U'Neshama a discount but they advised us the cost of the shoes has increased. Also, we work with an accredited optician in town who also gives us a discount but his cost is stable.

Lev U'Neshama is an Israeli registered non-profit charity organization, volunteer run, no business expenses whatsoever and every \$ goes into our programs.

Shoes: \$45 per pair regular and \$60 for First Steps, baby shoes.

Eye Exam/Eyeglasses: \$60 per child.

Your support is urgently requested.

Or use the Zelle US to US bank transfer system (contact me at mortsmo@aol.com for bank information.

US Donors may also send checks made payable to

Simcha Smolensky, my son, who is also a volunteer. Send to:

Rabbi Simcha Smolensky, 6739 N Mozart St Chicago IL 60645

Your support will be appreciated.

Yaffa Smolensky