

Ynet-News-Sept-10-2019

September 10

US & Iraqi forces bombed “end to end” an ISIS safe haven Qanus Island

September 10, 2019 - News Placed in Sept 10 spot - Tuesday

Netanyahu to annex West Bank’s Jordan Valley & northern Dead Sea after election

09.10.19 - News Placed in Sept 7 spot - Saturday

National security adviser John Bolton to be replaced next week

Trump fires 3rd national security adviser John Bolton

09.10.19

Netanyahu's Likud party 33 Knesset seats over Blue and White party's 32 in latest poll

09.09.19 - News Placed in Sept 9 spot - Monday

IAF attacked four missile depots in eastern Syria, moving Iran troops into the facility.

09.09.19

Benny Begin slams Likud as: 'arrogant, conceited, rude and flagrant behavior.'

09.08.19 - News Placed in Sept 8 spot - Sunday

Israeli Cabinet approved Sunday to have cameras monitor polls in Sept-17 election

09.05.19 Thursday - News Placed in Sept 6 spot - Friday

Netanyahu in London meets with Boris Johnson on Nuclear Iran & Two State Solution

09.05.19 Thursday - News Placed in Sept 5 spot - Thursday

Greenblat exits; leaving Kushner, Avi Berkowitz and Brian Hook on Peace Plan

09.04.19 - News Placed in Sept 4 spot - Wednesday

French propose EU loan to protect Iran oil 80%+ loss, from US sanctions

September 10

US & Iraqi forces bombed “end to end” an ISIS safe haven Qanus Island

F-35s and F-15s just obliterated an entire Iraqi island to root out ISIS fighters

Ellen Ioanes 18m

OIR f-15

A U.S. F-15C Eagle conducts a combat air patrol mission over an undisclosed location in Southwest Asia, Sept. 3, 2019. The Eagle's air superiority is achieved through a mixture of unprecedented maneuverability and acceleration, range, weapons and avionics. It can penetrate enemy defense and outperform and outfight any current enemy aircraft. Master Sgt. Russ Scalf / US Air Force / DVIDS

US Air Force F-15 Strike Eagles and F-35 Lightning II aircraft dropped 80,000 pounds of bombs on an island in Iraq's Salah al-Din province believed to be used as a transit point for ISIS fighters between Syria and Iraqi cities.

"We're denying Daesh the ability to hide on Qanus Island," said Maj. Gen. Eric T. Hill, commander of OIR's Special Operations Joint Task Force, said in a press release, using the Arabic acronym for ISIS.

Although US President Donald Trump said earlier this year that ISIS was defeated, the militant group has been resurgent in Iraq and Syria, at least partly because of Trump's decision to pull troops out of Syria, create a diplomatic vacuum in Iraq, and focus attention in the region on Iranian activity.

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On September 10, US and Iraqi forces dropped 80,000 pounds of munitions on Qanus Island, in Iraq's Salah-al-Din province, to destroy what Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) called a "safe haven" for ISIS fighters traveling from Syria into Iraq.

"We're denying Daesh the ability to hide on Qanus Island," said Maj. Gen. Eric T. Hill, commander of OIR's Special Operations Joint Task Force, said in a press release, using the Arabic acronym for ISIS.

Operation Inherent Resolve's spokesperson, Col. Myles B. Caggins, tweeted a video of the operation on Tuesday morning that shows bombs carpeting the tree-lined island from end to end, claiming the island was "Daesh infested."

OIR Spokesman Col. Myles B. Caggins III @OIRSpox 7:09 AM - Sep 10, 2019

Air Force Central command tweeted an additional statement, saying that the strikes come at the "behest of the Iraqi government" and that Qanus Island is believed to be "a major transit hub and safe haven for Daesh."

After the group's supposed defeat in March of 2019, the Islamic State regrouped in Syria and Iraq partly as a result of troop withdrawal in Syria and a diplomatic vacuum in Iraq, according to a Pentagon Inspector General's report. The report also blamed Trump's focus on Iran for the resurgence, pointing out that the administration's insufficient attention to Iraq and Syria also contributed to ISIS's ability to regroup, even though it has lost its caliphate.

While ISIS is not nearly as powerful as it once was — the Pentagon estimates the group has only 14,000 to 18,000 fighters in Iraq and Syria at present, compared to between 20,00 and 31,500 in 2014, the CIA estimated at the time. ISIS is still carrying out assassinations, crop burnings, ambushes, and suicide attacks.

OIR said that it targeted the island because ISIS militants were using the tiny island to transit from Syria and the Jazeera desert into the Iraqi cities of Mosul and Makhmour, and the Kirkuk region. The dense vegetation there allowed militants to hide easily, according to OIR.

Qanus air strikes

Air strikes on Qanus Island, Iraq, in the Tigris River on September 10, 2019. OIR

Spokesman Myles B. Caggins / US Air Force / Twitter

The airstrikes, carried out by US Air Force F-35 Lightning II and F15 Strike Eagles, came in the midst of Iraqi Prime Minister Abdel Mahdi's new policy to consider flights in Iraqi airspace hostile unless pre-approved or a medical emergency. That policy took effect August 15.

Insider reached out to Operation Inherent Resolve and Air Force Central Command for more information about the operation, but did not receive a response within a few hours. According to the release, **Iraqi Counter- Terrorism Services** are carrying out **additional ground operations on the island to "destroy any remaining Fallul Daesh on the island."**

Tue September 10, 2019

Netanyahu to annex West Bank's Jordan Valley & northern Dead Sea after election

Netanyahu says Israel will annex parts of West Bank

By Andrew Carey, **CNN**

Updated 2:01 PM ET, Tue **September 10, 2019**

Netanyahu says he'll annex parts of West Bank if re-elected

brexit uncertainty irish border fears robertson pkg nr vpx_00005915

How Brexit could make milk way more complicated

Netanyahu says he'll annex parts of West Bank if re-elected

In this image made from video, British lawmakers stage a protest in the House of Commons before prorogation of Parliament, in London, Tuesday Sept. 10, 2019. The British government has formally suspended Parliament, sending lawmakers home for five weeks amid a Brexit crisis. (Parliament TV via PA via AP)

Watch the chaos unfold as the UK's parliament is suspended

Netanyahu told reporters at a press conference that, **if re-elected and able to form a coalition, he would apply Israeli sovereignty over the Jordan Valley and the northern Dead Sea.**

He said he expected US President Donald Trump to present his **Middle East peace plan just days after Israelis vote next Tuesday, September 17,** and that in co-ordination with the US, he would also look to apply sovereignty over all Israeli settlements in the West Bank.

"[The US plan] poses a great challenge for us and a great opportunity, a historic opportunity to apply sovereignty over settlements in the West Bank and other areas of importance to our heritage," Netanyahu said.

A US administration official told CNN: "There is no change in United States policy at this time. **We will release our Vision for Peace after the Israeli election** and work to determine the best path forward to bring long sought security, opportunity and stability to the region."

The US was informed about Netanyahu's announcement before he made it, the official said, adding that the administration does not believe Netanyahu's announcement will get in the way of an eventual peace settlement.

Mixed reaction to announcement

Ayman Odeh, who represents Arab Israelis in the Knesset, condemned Netanyahu's announcement as a declaration that Israel is "effectively an apartheid state."

In a statement, the leader of the Joint Arab List, the alliance of parties representing Arab Israeli citizens in next week's elections, said: "Netanyahu is systematically closing the historical files, he is liquidating the Palestinian issue and eliminating the possibility of a peaceful two-state solution, that is, the possibility of peace. [This is] the implementation of the American deal of the century, and the official declaration that Israel is effectively an apartheid state."

In a statement, Israel's main opposition party, Blue and White, which is led by **Benny Gantz**, said it had always been in favor of applying sovereignty over the Jordan Valley but criticized how the Prime Minister made the announcement.

"The residents of the Jordan Valley do not feature in Netanyahu's propaganda," the party said. "Blue and White have made clear that the Jordan Valley is a part of Israel forever." "Netanyahu drafted a plan to cede the Jordan Valley in 2014," it added. "We are happy that Netanyahu has come around to adopt the Blue and White plan to recognize the Jordan Valley."

The Jordan Valley makes up the eastern half of the West Bank and lies on low ground in the valley created by the Jordan river. Israel has always viewed it as strategically important because of its long border with Jordan to the east.

Most Israeli settlements are not located in the Jordan Valley, but on higher ground to the west of the territory.

The West Bank was captured from Jordan by Israel in the Six Day War in 1967. **Most of the international community regards it as occupied territory and all Israeli settlements built on it as illegal**, though Israel disputes these characterizations.

CNN's Abeer Salman and Jeremy Diamond contributed to this report.



Netanyahu says Israel will annex Jordan Valley if he wins reelection

The prime minister says it would be a 'historic move' if Israel was to apply its sovereignty over the disputed territory in the West Bank; adds other Israeli settlements will follow if his Likud party would emerge victorious after September 17 elections

Ynet |Published: [09.10.19](#) , 18:41

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced Tuesday Israel will establish its sovereignty over the Jordan Valley if his party would win next week's elections, effectively triggering the disputed territory's annexation.

Speaking at a special press conference broadcast live on Israeli TV channels just a week before the September 17 elections, Netanyahu called the move a "historic opportunity" to extend Israeli sovereignty over the West Bank.

"Today, I announce my intention, after the establishment of a new government, to apply Israeli sovereignty to the Jordan Valley and the northern Dead Sea," Netanyahu said.

The prime minister said other Israeli settlements in the West Bank will follow, but after the publication of the long-delayed U.S. President Donald Trump's peace plan.

Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh, in a statement issued shortly before Netanyahu spoke, amid reports of a possible annexation announcement, said that the Israeli leader is "a prime destroyer of the peace process".

Palestinian official Saeb Erekat said Netanyahu's annexation plan is "manifestly illegal."

"Israel's unprecedented culture of impunity, enabled by international inaction, is the only explanation for Mr. Netanyahu's audacity in using annexation as an election ploy," he said, calling on the international community to block the Israeli leader's plan.

The Jordan Valley, which Palestinians seek for the eastern perimeter of a state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, stretches from the Dead Sea in the south to the Israeli city of Beit Shean in the north. **Israel captured the West Bank in a 1967 war.**

The 2,400 square kilometre (926.65 square mile) valley accounts for nearly 30 percent of the territory in the West Bank. Israel has long said it intends to maintain military control there under any peace agreement with the Palestinians.

Reuters contributed to this report

09.10.19

Trump fires 3rd national security adviser John Bolton

Trump fires national security adviser, says 'his services no longer needed'

The president says him and John Bolton 'disagreed strongly' on many issues and he will name a new candidate for his position sometime next week; Bolton was Trump's third national security adviser

Ynet, Associated Press|Published: **09.10.19**, 19:10

U.S. President Donald Trump on **Tuesday announced** he has fired his National Security Adviser John Bolton.

"I informed John Bolton last night that his services are no longer needed at the White House. I disagreed strongly with many of his suggestions, as did others in the administration," the president wrote on his Twitter account.

"I asked John for his resignation, which was given to me this morning. I thank John very much for his service. I **will be naming a new National Security Advisor next week.**"

Bolton responded in a tweet of his own that he offered to resign Monday "and President Trump said, 'Let's talk about it tomorrow.'"

Bolton's ouster came as a surprise to many in the White House. Just an hour before Trump's tweet, the press office announced that Bolton would join Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin in a briefing.

One Republican familiar with the disagreements between Trump and Bolton said the adviser's opposition to a possible meeting between Trump and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani was a precipitating factor in the dismissal. French President Emmanuel Macron has been trying to broker such a meeting, possibly on the sidelines of the upcoming U.N. General Assembly, in the hope of salvaging the international Iran nuclear deal that Trump withdrew from.

Bolton was always an unlikely pick to be Trump's third national security adviser, with a world view seemingly ill-fit to the president's isolationist "America First" pronouncements.

He's espoused hawkish foreign policy views dating back to the Reagan administration and became a household name over his vociferous support for the Iraq War as the U.S. ambassador to the U.N. under George W. Bush. Bolton even briefly considered running for president in 2016, in part to make the case against the isolationism that Trump would come to embody.

Inside the administration he advocated caution on the president's whirlwind rapprochement with North Korea and against Trump's decision last year to pull U.S. troops out of Syria. He masterminded a quiet campaign inside the administration and with allies abroad to convince Trump to keep U.S. forces in Syria to counter the remnants of the Islamic State and Iranian influence in the region.

Bolton was named Trump's third national security adviser in April 2018 after the departure of Army Gen. H.R. McMaster.

09.10.19

Netanyahu's Likud party 33 Knesset seats over Blue and White party's 32 in latest poll

Netanyahu's party inches over its closest rival in latest poll

According to a poll conducted by HOT media company, the ruling Likud would receive 33 Knesset seats over Blue and White party's 32, while the Joint List - political alliance of the main Arab-dominated parties - would be the third most dominant faction with 10 seats

Ynet|Published: 09.10.19 , 17:25

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud appears to have gained a slight edge over its main rival the Blue and White party ahead of the September 17 elections, according to the latest poll conducted by HOT media company.

The poll, released on Tuesday, shows the ruling Likud leading with 33 potential Knesset seats over Blue and White's 32.

The survey reveals if the next week's elections were to be held today, the Joint List - a political alliance of the main Arab-dominated political parties in Israel - would get 10 seats, Avigdor Liberman's Yisrael Beytenu would get 9 seats.

Ayelet Shaked's Yamina party, formerly known as United Right, would get 7 seats, the ultra-Orthodox United Torah Judaism party would also get 7 seats, which is on par with its Sephardic counterpart Shas.

The Democratic Union - an amalgam of the left-wing Meretz party, Ehud Barak's Israel Democratic Party and Labor defector Stav Shaffir - would get 6 seats, the Labor-Gesher union would receive 5 seats and Otzma Yehudit (Jewish Power) appears to barely inch over the electoral threshold with 4 potential seats.

The survey was conducted among 3,636 HOT subscribers with a representative sample of the overall Israeli population aged 18 and over. The maximum sampling error in the survey is +1.6%.

09.09.19

IAF attacked four missile depots in eastern Syria, moving Iran troops into the facility.

Satellite images taken after airstrike show damage to warehouses of pro-Iranian militia in Syria

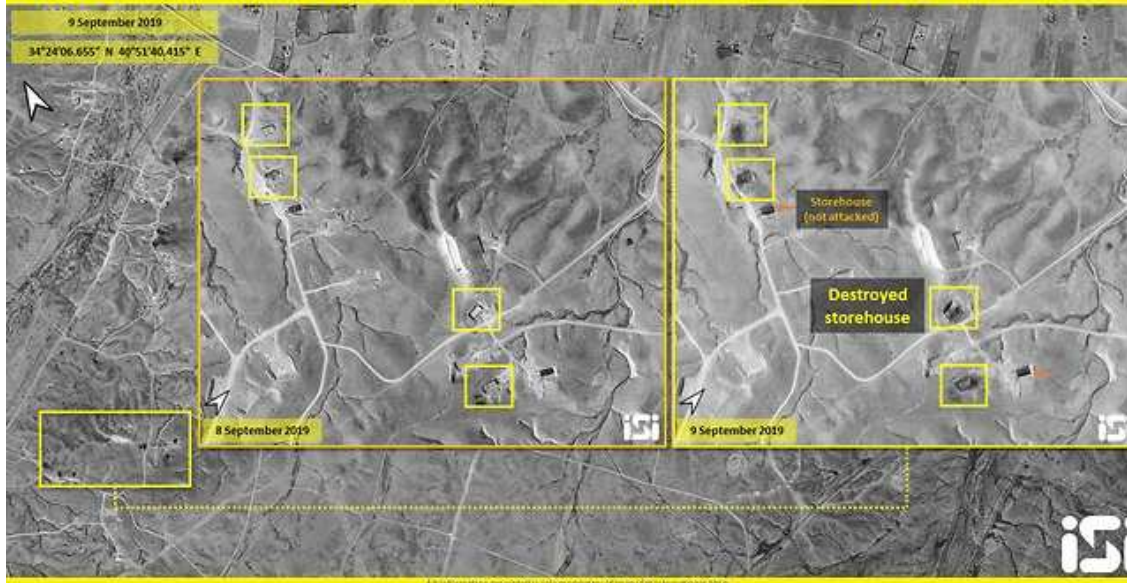
Compared to images of the same compound taken a day earlier, the photos show that the four depots - suspected of housing a delivery of precision missiles - were carefully selected as targets, with other facilities nearby untouched

Yoav Zitun and Daniel Salami | Published: 09.09.19, 20:39

Satellite images taken Monday following an overnight air strike along Syria's border with Iraq showed damage to four large warehouses of a pro-Iran militia.

According to foreign news reports, the Israel Air Force attacked the site, which holds an expansive military complex, several times in recent years.

Syria, Albukamal: The New Iranian Military Compound – Attack's Aftereffect



Images taken after the airstrike on a facility on Syria's border with Iraq (Photo: ImageSat International)

Compared to **images of the same compound taken a day earlier**, the satellite photos show the warehouses - suspected of housing a delivery of precision missiles - were carefully

Nearby warehouses were not attacked and remained intact after the strike.

Syrian opposition activists on Monday said at least 18 people were killed in the aerial attack, which targeting pro-Iranian militias in the town of Al Bukamal **in eastern Syria**.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the attacks began late Sunday and continued after midnight. Three explosions were heard in the area.

Two local activist collectives in eastern Syria - the Euphrates Post and the Sound and Pictures - also reported the airstrikes in Boukamal, without giving a death toll.

Sound and Pictures said the strikes hit an arms depot for Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces, a mostly Iran-backed Shiite militias.

Hours after the air strikes, the Israel Defense Forces said pro-Iranian militias in Syria made a failed attempt to launch missiles into Israeli territory.

"The rocket fire was carried out by Shiite militias led by The Quds Force (an elite unit in the Iranian Revolutionary Guard that operates outside Iranian territory) from Syrian territory on the outskirts of Damascus," said the IDF Spokesperson's Unit.

"The IDF holds the Syrian regime responsible for any action taking place on its territory."

Last week, Fox News reported that Tehran had established its largest military base in Syria to date, located near the area attacked by unknown warplanes overnight.

According to the report, Iran was in the process of moving thousands of troops into the facility.

09.09.19

Benny Begin slams Likud as: 'arrogant, conceited, rude and flagrant behavior.'

Benny Begin slams Likud: I will not vote for my own political party

Party scion says Likud members have displayed 'arrogant, conceited, rude and flagrant behavior,' and warns that politicians 'can't continue to behave like that and still expect a reward'

Moran Azoulay|Published: 09.09.19 , 13:42

Benny Begin, a former Likud Knesset member and son of the party's first ever prime minister, on Monday morning issued a blistering condemnation of the party and announced he would be casting his vote elsewhere in the September 17 elections.

"It's impossible," Begin said. "You can't continue to behave like that and still expect a reward."

"There is price for such arrogant, conceited, rude and flagrant behavior," Begin told Army Radio.

"In recent years, it seems to me that the Likud leadership has put considerable effort into making it difficult for me to support Likud, and in recent months has even deterred me from voting for the party in the elections."

Begin was first elected to the Knesset in 1988. He was the oldest MK in the 20th Knesset, in which he served partially, and the only Likud member who decided not to participate in the party primaries and actually quit politics.

During his tenure, he served as science minister and was a member of various committees, including the Internal Affairs and Environment Committee and the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee.

In November 2017, the veteran MK refused to support the Recommendations Law, which banned police from publicly stating at the end of an investigation whether there was sufficient evidence to prosecute.

As a result, Begin was ousted from the Internal Affairs Committee by then-coalition chairman David Bitan who himself took the vacant seat.

The move was harshly criticized by opposition lawmakers who said that the legislation was designed to benefit Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in his various criminal investigations.

Begin said at the time: "This law, in the wording before us, has no defined start date and I propose to fill that absence with as follows: The law will apply to investigations that begin after its publication."

09.08.19

Cabinet approved Sunday to have cameras monitor polls in Sept-17 election

Government approves voting cameras, critics cry foul

The law would let cameras into polling stations next week as Netanyahu makes voter fraud a key election issue; critics of the bill, among which are Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit and President Rivlin, call it voter intimidation, say it targets Arab community Reuters|Published: 09.08.19 , 16:03

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's cabinet approved draft legislation on Sunday to have cameras monitor polling stations in Israel's election next week, a move opponents said was effectively meant to intimidate Arab voters.

Fighting for political survival after an inconclusive ballot in April, the right-wing Netanyahu has made voter fraud a key issue in his campaign for a fifth term, cautioning that victory could be stolen from him in what polls show to be a close race.

In the previous election, Netanyahu's Likud party sent monitors equipped with body cameras to a several polling stations with Arab constituents in what Arab politicians described as voter intimidation.

On election days in Israel, representatives of most parties sit at venues to check the pre-vote identification process. Voters are then handed an envelope and go behind a screen to cast their ballot in private.

Addressing his cabinet on Sunday, Netanyahu said that under the legislation, which will go to parliament for approval before the September 17 election, monitors will be able to use their cellular telephone cameras to record outside of the actual voting booth.

"Everyone films," Netanyahu said in public remarks at the meeting. "Any shop is filmed by cameras, so the polling stations are the only places where you can't film?"

In his comments to the cabinet, which government officials said approved the legislation unanimously, Netanyahu pledged: "The secrecy of the vote will be strictly preserved."

Ayman Odeh, head of the Arab Joint List party, said on Twitter that Netanyahu's focus on the issue of voter fraud was aimed at "triggering a panic vote" by his supporters on the right and "suppressing the Arab vote".

"(Netanyahu) is preparing the ground for the day he declares, 'Arabs have stolen the elections', and contests the results if he loses," Odeh said.

Yair Lapid, co-leader of the centrist Blue and White Party, which is running neck-and-neck with Likud in polls, alluded to the impact the deployment of cameras might have on Arab voter turnout, describing the bill as "racist" in comments on Twitter.

Arabs make up 21 percent of Israel's population and generally vote not for Likud but for their own Arab parties or centrist or left-wing Jewish parties.

The proposed bill was opposed by the head of the Central Election Commission that oversees the vote, who said the last-minute introduction of cameras might "lead to chaos".

Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit, who advises the cabinet on legal issues, also came out against the legislation, saying it could violate laws ensuring voters' privacy.

For that reason, most Western democracies have restrictions on the use of cameras at ballot stations.

Two weeks after the election, Mandelblit will hold a pre-trial hearing in which Netanyahu can argue against his announced intent to indict him in three corruption cases. Netanyahu, in office for the past 10 years, has denied any wrongdoing.

09.05.19 Thursday

Greenblat exits; leaving Kushner, Avi Berkowitz and Brian Hook on Peace Plan

Trump's Mideast peace envoy set to leave the White House

Greenblat advocated for decisions to relocate the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem and recognize Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights -- moves that drew skepticism from Palestinians and Arab nations

Associated Press, Ynet|Published: 09.05.19, 19:33

The Trump administration official tasked with developing a plan to bring peace between Israel and the Palestinians is leaving the White House.

Jason Greenblat, Trump's special representative for international negotiations, will depart the administration in the coming weeks, the White House said Thursday.

The former Trump Organization lawyer had been leading the effort to devise the off-delayed peace plan, and his departure casts further doubt on the proposal's future.

The White House says the peace plan is complete but will not be released until at least after this month's Israeli elections. The plan already is facing rejection by Palestinian officials, who object to strengthening ties between the U.S. and Israel.

In a tweet, President Donald Trump thanked Greenblat for his service and said that Greenblat "dedication to Israel and to seeking peace between Israel and the Palestinians won't be forgotten." He said Greenblat is pursuing work in the private sector.

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

After almost 3 years in my Administration, Jason Greenblatt will be leaving to pursue work in the private sector. Jason has been a loyal and great friend and fantastic lawyer....

Greenblat worked in concert with White House senior adviser Jared Kushner, the president's son-in-law, on the plan.

Kushner praised Greenblat and said "work has helped develop the relationships between Israel and its neighbors as he is trusted and respected by all of the leaders throughout the region."

Greenblat advocated for decisions to relocate the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem and recognize Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights -- moves that drew skepticism from Palestinians and Arab nations.

Apart from alienating the Palestinian leadership and securing the tacit support from some Gulf Arab states, the team's only visible accomplishment has been the release of an ambitious \$50 billion economic proposal for the West Bank, Gaza and Palestinian communities in Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon.

That plan was rolled out a workshop in Bahrain this year that was boycotted by the Palestinian Authority. Despite the plan's lofty goals, no money for the projects it envisions has been secured.

Greenblat had stepped up his public engagement before the announcement of the economic plan, but it was perhaps most notable for criticizing Palestinian leaders on Twitter for their rejection of the proposal and the as-yet unseen political portion of the peace plan.

In contrast to Democratic and Republican predecessors, the White House has stopped promoting a two-state solution between Israel and the Palestinians and avoided condemning Israeli settlement expansion on occupied lands.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu responded by saying "I would like to thank Jason Greenblatt for the work he has done to promote world peace".

Netanyahu added Greenblatt never hesitated to speak the truth about Israel. "Thank you Jason" he said.

The Jerusalem move, followed by cuts of hundreds of millions of dollars in aid, prompted the Palestinians to sever most ties with the U.S.

Nabil Abu Rdeneh, spokesman for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, said the Palestinians will "shed no tears" over Greenblatt's departure.

"He ruined the credibility of the United States and destroyed the peace process," Abu Rdeneh said.

The White House peace effort initially operated largely in isolation from the rest of the U.S. foreign policy apparatus. But as Greenblatt's departure has approached, the White House has begun integrating it with the State Department's Iran team.

Greenblatt's role is expected to be assumed by Kushner aide Avi Berkowitz and Brian Hook, the State Department's special representative for Iran.

09.05.19 Thursday

Netanyahu in London meets with Johnson on Nuclear Iran & Two State Solution

PM says he will raise Iranian nuclear ambitions in talks with British counterpart, American defense secretary, calls on world leaders to shun Tehran regime after Trump says he is open to meeting with Rouhani at UN General Assembly this month; Johnson tells Netanyahu that he wants to discuss the Two State Solution

Ynet, Reuters|Published: 09.05.19 , 14:25

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with his British counterpart Boris Johnson in London on Thursday, for talks that the Israeli leader said would center on Iran's nuclear ambitions, its decision to accelerate uranium enrichment and the prospects of talks between the Iranian and American presidents.

"I will discuss all of these issues with British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and U.S. Secretary of Defense Mark Esper during my snap visit to London," said Netanyahu as he prepared to leave Tel Aviv for London. "These are important matters for the State of Israel at all times, but especially now.

As the two met, Johnson told Netanyahu that he wants to discuss with him the Two State Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, and Netanyahu replied that they will discuss that matter as well.

Netanyahu urged world powers not to open a dialogue with Iran, after U.S. President Donald Trump said he may meet his Iranian counterpart to resolve a crisis over Tehran's nuclear program and sanctions against it.

"This is not the time to hold talks with Iran. This is the time to increase the pressure on Iran," Netanyahu told reporters at Ben Gurion Airport before boarding his flight to the UK.

Netanyahu's comments marked rare public discord between the right-wing Israeli leader and Trump on the Iranian nuclear issue. Netanyahu had previously counselled France against its own outreach to Iran.

On Wednesday, Trump left the door open to a possible meeting with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani at the upcoming UN General Assembly in New York, saying: "Anything's possible. They would like to be able to solve their problem."

Tehran has rejected any negotiations with Washington unless Trump drops sanctions he imposed after withdrawing from the 2015 Iranian nuclear deal, an agreement Netanyahu also opposed.

Iran has said that, starting on Friday, it would begin developing centrifuges to speed up the enrichment of uranium, which can produce fuel for power plants or for atomic bombs. The Iranians deny seeking the latter.

The centrifuge move would be Iran's latest reduction of its commitments to restrict nuclear projects under the 2015 deal.

Netanyahu called this "another violation, another provocation by Iran, this time in the realm of its quest for nuclear weaponry ... This joins Iran's aggressive acts against international shipping and against countries in the region, as well as its efforts to carry out murderous attacks against the State of Israel, efforts that have not ceased," he said.

09.04.19

French propose EU loan to protect Iran oil 80%+ loss, from US sanctions

Iran gives Europe two more months to save nuclear deal, warns of 'extraordinary' future breaches

State run TV says Tehran has nixed proposal to preserve 2015 agreement in return for guarantees of \$15 billion in Iranian oil sales, apparently contradicting to earlier statement by deputy FM

Reuters|Published: 09.04.19 , 12:11

Iran's President Hassan Rouhani gave European powers another two months to save a 2015 nuclear deal on Wednesday, but warned that **Tehran still preparing for further significant breaches** of the pact that would have "extraordinary effects."

His statement came as Iranian officials gave mixed signals in response to a French proposal to save the agreement by offering Iran about **\$15 billion in credit** lines until year-end **if Tehran comes fully back into compliance**.

Once senior Iranian official said it would comply if it got that amount in credit lines or oil sales, while state run press TV said **Iran had rejected a proposal for an EU loan** of that amount.

Iran emerged from years of economic isolation after agreeing a deal with world powers in 2015 to curb its nuclear development program in exchange for sanctions relief. However, U.S. President Donald Trump abandoned the deal last year and reimposed sanctions.

Tehran responded with two separate moves that breached some of the terms of the deal, although it **says it still aims to save the pact**.

Rouhani had threatened to take further measures by Sept. 5 unless France and the other European signatories of the pact did more to **protect Iran from the impact of the U.S. penalties**.

"I think it is unlikely that we will reach a result with Europe by today or tomorrow ... Europe will have another two-month to fulfil its commitments," Rouhani said, according to state TV.

Iran would continue with plans to breach the pact further and accelerate its nuclear activity, he added.

"The third step (in reducing Iran's commitments) will be the most important one and it will have extraordinary effects," state TV reported him as saying.

Iranian officials initially said they were considering the French plan when news of it emerged on Tuesday.

On Wednesday, Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi appeared to back its main terms.

"Our return to the full implementation of the nuclear accord is subject to the receipt of \$15 billion over a four-month period, otherwise the process of reducing Iran's commitments will continue," the semi-official news agency Fars quoted Araqchi as saying.

"Either Europe has to buy oil from Iran or provide Iran with the equivalent of selling oil as a credit line guaranteed by Iran's oil revenues, which in some sense means a pre-sale of oil," Araqchi added.

Soon after, Iran's English-language Press TV issued a short report stating: "Iran has rejected a \$15 billion loan offered by EU," without giving further details. Western and Iranian sources had described the French plan as the offer of a credit line, not a loan, although the precise details have not been made public.

Iran's vital crude oil sales have plummeted by more than 80% under the U.S. sanctions.

The remaining signatories of the deal have been working to save an agreement that they say will bring Iran back into the international fold and prevent Tehran from developing a nuclear bomb.

Iran has repeatedly said its nuclear program is for electricity generation and other peaceful purposes.