

Ynet-News-Dec-5-2019

12.05.19 – Th - - - News Placed in Dec 6 spot – Friday

Lebanon Hezbollah ignores protests & corruption, seeks to develop guided missiles

12.05.19 – Th -

Israel plans to annex Jordan Valley & develop a joint defense treaty with US

12.05.19 – Th - - - News Placed in Dec 5 spot – Thursday

Czech Republic gave Israel arms in 1948; now buying the unique Israeli Iron Dome

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Prosecutors announce bribery, money laundering charges in German submarine deal

12.05.19 – Th - - - News Placed in Dec 12 spot – Thursday

British PM election Dec 12 between pro-Palestine Corbyn & pro-Israel Johnson

12.05.19 – Th -

Unity government meeting of Likud and Blue and White unsuccessful

12.04.19 – We - - - News Placed in Dec 3 spot – Tuesday

Egypt pushes five-year treaty; Gaza demands end to Egypt & Israel blockade

12.05.19

Lebanon Hezbollah ignores protests & corruption, seeks to develop guided missiles

12.05.19

Israeli military says Hezbollah undeterred despite recent setbacks

IDF officials say neither the destruction of the terror group's attack tunnels, nor the Lebanese faction's recent domestic problems have undermined Iranian-backed Hezbollah's preparations for a war with Israel

Associated Press| Updated: 12.05.19 , 22:13

A year after uncovering a network of cross-border Hezbollah tunnels, the Israeli military says the Lebanese militant group has beefed up its presence along the volatile frontier.

Military officials say that neither the destruction of the tunnels, nor Hezbollah's recent domestic problems, have weakened the group's desire to prepare for renewed conflict with Israel.

"We have a very serious enemy," said Col. Roy Levy, the military's Northern Border Brigade commander, during a tour of the area Thursday. He said the group's main focus is to entrench itself along the border area and "plan to attack us."

Israel and Hezbollah fought a month long war in 2006 that ended in a U.N.-brokered cease-fire. While direct fighting has been rare since then, there has been occasional violence, most recently on September 1 when Hezbollah fired a barrage of anti-tank missiles into Israel and Israel responded with artillery fire.

Israel also has acknowledged carrying out scores of airstrikes in neighboring Syria, many of them believed to have been aimed at Iranian weapons shipments bound for its Hezbollah proxy.

Israel considers Hezbollah to be its most immediate threat, saying the group has amassed an arsenal of some 130,000 rockets and missiles capable of striking virtually anywhere in Israel. More recently, it has accused the group of trying to import or develop guided missiles.

Last December, Israel announced that it had uncovered a network of tunnels that it said Hezbollah was building with the aim of infiltrating and carrying out attacks. Over several months, it systematically destroyed the structures.

Hezbollah has not commented on the tunnels, though the U.N. peacekeeping force UNIFIL has said the group violated the 2006 cease-fire.

In recent years, Israeli says Hezbollah has taken over houses in southern Lebanese border villages to hide soldiers, ammunition, cameras and intelligence-gathering equipment.

Levy pointed across the tree-lined frontier to several small shacks that he said were Hezbollah positions, just a few hundred meters away from Israeli residents. "Civilians, farmers, children drive here every day," he said.

In addition to the loss of its tunnels, Hezbollah has suffered other setbacks in recent months. Its patron Iran, suffering from U.S. sanctions, is being rocked by mass demonstrations in which over 200 people have reportedly been killed.

Lebanon has also experienced nationwide protests over the past two months against widespread corruption and mismanagement. Some of that anger has been directed toward Hezbollah, which is now seen as part of the ruling class that has wrecked the country's economy.

But Levy said he has seen no changes in the group's behavior.

12.05.19

Israel plans to annex Jordan Valley & develop a joint defense treaty with US

12.05.19

PM: Israel has 'full right' to annex strategic Jordan Valley

Netanyahu adds that during his meeting with Secretary of State Pompeo in Lisbon, the two agreed to move forward with plans for a joint defense treaty; PM also denies reports

of him agreeing to serve only 6 months as premier as part of the rotation agreement with Blue and White

Associated Press, Ynet| Updated: 12.05.19 , 20:55

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says his country has the "full right" to annex the Jordan Valley.

Netanyahu said his proposal to annex the strategic part of the West Bank was discussed during a late-night meeting in Lisbon, Portugal with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

In a report Thursday, the ICC's chief prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, said her office was following "with concern" the Israeli proposal. But Netanyahu told reporters it was Israel's "full right to do so, if we choose so."

Netanyahu also said they agreed to move forward with plans for a joint defense treaty. Israeli defense officials, including Blue and White leader Benny Gantz, have expressed concern that such a pact could limit Israel's freedom to operate militarily. Netanyahu said he was aware of the reservations but assured that it was a "historic opportunity" and Israel would not be limited to act against archenemy Iran.

The Trump administration has already delivered a number of landmark victories to Netanyahu, recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital and recognizing Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights.

Netanyahu, beleaguered by a corruption indictment and political instability at home, is promoting the two initiatives as a rationale for his staying in office.

When asked about reports that he'd agreed to serve only six months as premier in a unity government as part of a rotation deal with the Blue and White party, Netanyahu said, "I don't want six months, I want two years."

Israel's leader then addressed a possible long-term ceasefire arrangement with Hamas, saying Gaza's rulers have been "seeking the agreement for a long time."

12.05.19

Czech Republic gave Israel arms in 1948; now buying the unique Israeli Iron Dome

12.05.19

Iron Dome's key technology to be sold to Czech Republic

In a deal, worth some \$115 million, 8 radar systems capable of detecting incoming targets - from a mortar shell to a ballistic missile - are expected to be supplied to the NATO nation over a period of 8 years

Ynet| Updated: 12.05.19 , 18:48

The radar system that is an integral part of Israel's famed missile defense systems, the Iron Dome and the David's Sling, is to be sold to the Czech Republic, making it the first purchase of the unique Israeli technology by a NATO nation.

The deal, which appears to be worth more than NIS 400 million (\$115 million), includes the purchase of at least eight ELM-2084 (a mobile S-Band Multi-Mission Radar) systems to the Czech military.

Israel will supply the systems over a period of eight years, from The radars are suitable for synchronization with NATO's own defense systems and will also be incorporated into command and control systems.

The radar, developed by ELTA Systems - a group and subsidiary of Israel Aerospace Industries - is capable of detecting and tracking almost all types of incoming targets, from a mortar shell to a ballistic missile.

As part of the deal between the two countries there will also be further industrial cooperation and exchange of technology and knowledge. In addition, at least 30% of the radar system's components will be manufactured in the Czech Republic.

The head of the Defense Exports & Cooperation Division at the Defense Ministry, Brig. Gen. (res.) Yair Coles said it's a "historic" achievement that a country that provided Israel with arms when it was first established was now purchasing weapons from it. "The agreement will further strengthen the friendship and the security cooperation between Israel and the Czech Republic," said Coles. "It represents a vote of confidence in the capabilities of the Israeli defense system, our excellent industries and their technological capabilities," he said.

"We hope the agreement will open doors for further cooperation with the Czech Republic and other NATO countries."

12.05.19

Prosecutors announce bribery, money laundering charges in German submarine deal

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Prosecutors announce bribery, money laundering charges in German submarine deal

Seven people set to be indicted, pending a hearing, in what is known in Israel as Case 3000, including Netanyahu's personal attorney and cousin David Shimron, former Israel Navy commander Eliezer Marom and PM's ex-chief of staff David Sharan

Associated Press, Reuters | Updated: 12.05.19 , 17:02

State Prosecutor Shai Nitzan said Thursday he intends to indict seven men, including close associates of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in a sweeping graft case related to a possible conflict of interest involving a \$2 billion purchase of German submarines.

Nitzan's office said in a statement the seven would be charged with various offenses, among them bribery, money laundering and fraud, pending a hearing.

Netanyahu was questioned, but not named as a suspect, in the submarine probe, known as Case 3000. But it roped in some of his closest aides and sparked questions about his earnings on a related German submarine sale to Egypt.

Among those facing charges are Netanyahu's personal attorney, David Shimron, who is also his cousin. Shimron represented Thyssenkrupp, the German ship maker involved, and was suspected of using his influence over the prime minister in return for a hefty cut of the deal.

Thyssenkrupp has said an internal probe found no evidence of corruption in its handling of the 2016 contract for the sale of the submarines to Israel, and prosecutors have taken no action against the conglomerate.

Also set to be indicted is David Sharan, who once served as Netanyahu's chief of staff. Former commander of the Israel Navy Admiral Eliezer Marom is also facing charges. The Justice Ministry said prosecutors accepted recommendations made by police last year to indict Shimron, Sharan, Marom and businessman Miki Ganor, who was Thyssenkrupp's local agent.

Pending the pre-trial hearings, Shimron will be charged with money laundering; Sharan, Marom and Ganor will face that charge as well as bribery, the Justice Ministry said.

All the suspects have denied any wrongdoing.

The submarine deal has been under public scrutiny since it emerged that Shimron also represented Ganor, raising concerns of a conflict of interest.

After seeming to escape the submarine scandal, it was revealed that Netanyahu reportedly earned \$4 million on a related German submarine sale to Egypt by owning shares in one of the German manufacturer's suppliers. He has denied wrongdoing.

Netanyahu was recently charged with bribery, fraud, and breach of trust in three separate corruption cases in which he is accused of trading regulatory or legislative favors in exchange for lavish gifts and favorable news coverage.

The prime minister has professed innocence in all three, saying the charges are trumped up by a biased justice system egged on by a liberal media.

Netanyahu, Israel's longest-serving leader, is fighting for his political life following two inconclusive elections and the likelihood of an unprecedented third in one year.

12.05.19

British PM election Dec 12 between pro-Palestine Corbyn & pro-Israel Johnson

12.05.19

FM: I hope Corbyn loses British election due to 'whole wave of anti-Semitism'

Israel Katz says no talks in Jerusalem over prospect of Labour leader winning on Dec. 12 or future of intelligence and security ties with Britain should vehemently pro-Palestinian MP, who has pledged to tighten arms sales to Israel, become prime minister
Reuters| Updated: 12.05.19 , 12:53

Foreign Minister Israel Katz said on Thursday that he hopes Jeremy Corbyn loses next week's British election, citing allegations of anti-Semitism buffeting the Labour Party leader.

With Israel in political disarray of its own after two inconclusive elections, the British contest has elicited few comments from Israeli leaders despite deep concern among British Jews over Corbyn and media reports that some might opt to emigrate if he wins.

Last week, Foreign Minister Israel Katz said the Israeli government had not discussed the prospect of Corbyn's election or the future of intelligence and security ties with Britain should the veteran pro-Palestinian campaigner become its leader.

But pressed on the issue in an Israeli Army Radio interview on Thursday, Katz was more forthcoming as the Dec. 12 ballot approaches.

"I won't meddle in internal elections but I personally hope that he won't be elected, with this whole wave of anti-Semitism...I hope the other side wins," he said.

Labour Party spokesmen did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Katz played down the prospect that security relations with Britain, which include intelligence sharing over Islamist militant activity, would necessarily be degraded should Corbyn take office.

"Leaders don't harm their country's own interests so fast. But we will, of course, discuss these things if they occur," Katz said.

Jeremy Corbyn apparently joining in prayer at the Tunisia grave of the mastermind of the Munich Olympics terror attack

Corbyn has rejected allegations of anti-Semitism - last week Britain's chief rabbi accused him of failing to stem the "poison" gripping Labour - while holding to policies that rile Israel.

Last year, Corbyn said he would recognize a Palestinian state if elected. In a speech on Sunday, he pledged increased oversight of British arms exports to Israel in the name of not fueling its conflict with the Palestinians.

On Tuesday, Corbyn apologized for not doing enough to tackle anti-Semitism in his party, after he came under massive criticism for refusing repeatedly to do so during a BBC interview days earlier.

"Obviously I'm very sorry for everything that has happened," he said. "But I want to make this clear, I am dealing with it, I have dealt with it."

Polls have shown Labour trailing Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservative Party.

And for now, Israel does not appear to be bracing for any influx of British Jewish immigrants.

Asked about this possibility, its Immigration Ministry said in a brief statement only that it "is prepared to take in immigrants from all over the world and welcomes immigration in any political situation."

The Jewish Agency for Israel, which handles immigration requests abroad, said 507 British Jews moved to Israel between January and October, an 8% rise compared with the same period in 2018.

Yigal Palmor, the agency's head of international relations, played down any sense that **Corbyn's candidacy was a major spur for British Jews to leave.**

"We have no solid findings to show an increase in British immigration (due to the elections). What we have are more general indications - more discussions of the option," he said.

12.05.19

Unity government meeting of Likud and Blue and White unsuccessful

12.05.19

Lieberman: unity, narrow governments off the table

Lieberman shuts door on government efforts, says **Israel is going to unprecedented third elections in a year, blames stubbornness of both big parties**

Sima Kadmon | Updated: **12.05.19**, 09:23

Yisrael Beiteinu Chairman Avigdor Lieberman said Wednesday that all efforts to form a government, either a unity government or a narrow right-wing government, have been exhausted and that Israel is going to elections.

"The combination of a narrow government and critical economic and security decisions may cause a rift and greater polarization in the people," said Lieberman. "A narrow government is a government of total failure, a government of constant disagreements."

Lieberman then went on to point **an accusing finger at Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Blue and White leader Benny Gantz** for their failure to make concessions. "During the entire trial period to form a government, Netanyahu and Gantz were too busy playing the blame game," said Lieberman. "I tried to pressure them into forming a unity government."

When Netanyahu had the mandate [to form a government], I held my peace. In the last week, we hinted at joining Netanyahu's right-wing bloc to put pressure on Blue and White, but unfortunately, they both made a strategic decision not to choose unity, and so, both parties are equally responsible for the next elections."

On election night, we promised to leave no stone unturned, to take any chance and bring about every thinkable initiative. We've done it. We come with our hands clean. These elections have nothing to do with my, or Yisrael Beiteinu's, efforts to bring unity."

Everyone is simply awestruck by their polls – Netanyahu believes that he could muster up 61 seats without us next elections. Gantz is certain that he and his party can get 36 seats and win the next elections."

Personally, it would've been best for me to join a narrow government with Netanyahu. It would have been a 63-seat government, I could've been deputy prime minister and defense minister, get every committee I want and every budget that would serve my party's interests. There is no other party that would make such a decision in complete contradiction to its interests and the good of the State of Israel. We're not all talk." Likud and Blue and White traded accusations on Tuesday, after what appeared to have been another **unsuccessful meeting** between both party leaders aimed to **narrow the gaps on a unity government**.

Likud officials said that Netanyahu and Gantz's meeting ended without the parties reaching an understanding because of Blue and White's continuous refusal to accept Likud's "far-reaching concessions".

"Netanyahu has offered to pass creative legislation to anchor the premiership rotation deal and to prevent any of the parties from breaking it," said the officials. "However, despite far-reaching concessions, Blue and White continue refusing to form a unity government."

Blue and White hit back at the allegations and said that Netanyahu and Likud have yet to offer a new premiership rotation deal fitting Netanyahu's legal status after he was indicted in three different corruption cases.

"Netanyahu hasn't brought forth any new proposal fitting his legal situation or at all. During the meeting, he also refused to commit to not seek personal immunity in

12.04.19

Egypt pushes five-year treaty; Gaza demands end to Egypt & Israel blockade

12.04.19

Egypt said pushing Hamas, Israel on five-year Gaza cease-fire

Palestinian officials says **Cairo trying to reach agreement** on long-term period of calm, as Egyptian officials host Hamas and Islamic **Jihad leaders** in capital; despite talks, Hamas set to resume often **violent weekly protests** along **Gaza border** fence after three-week hiatus

Elior Levy, i24NEWS| Updated: **12.04.19** , 18:40

Egypt is pressing Israel and Hamas, the terrorist organization that controls the Gaza Strip, to agree to a **five-year ceasefire deal**, Palestinian newspaper Al-Quds reported **Wednesday**, citing Palestinian officials.

Israeli TV said Sunday that there had been "significant progress" in Egypt's mediation efforts with Hamas to achieve an agreement for a sustained period of calm in Gaza, also quoting Palestinian sources.

Lebanese newspaper Al-Akhbar, which is considered very close to Hamas, said Wednesday that Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh and Islamic Jihad leader Ziad al-Nahala had met to coordinate understandings on the removal of the Israeli and Egyptian blockade of the Gaza Strip, which both countries say was introduced in an effort to stymie terrorist activity emanating from the enclave.

The two were among senior members of Hamas military wing the Izz a-Din al-Qassam Brigades and Islamic Jihad who traveled to Cairo earlier this week as part of ongoing negotiations for an agreement.

Hamas sources confirmed last week that contacts regarding an agreement with Israel have been renewed via international mediators, primarily Egyptian intelligence officials. Al-Akhbar reported Friday that UN special envoy to the Middle East Nickolay Mladenov was expected to meet with the Hamas leadership to finalize the terms of the agreement. Mladenov and the Hamas leadership were to discuss the possibility of reaching a long-term settlement agreement with Israel, which would include a solution to the most pressing issues - including the two Israeli captives and bodies of two fallen IDF soldiers held by Hamas and easing the closure on the Strip.

Meanwhile, Hamas on Tuesday called on Gaza residents to turn out in large numbers for a demonstration against Israel on Friday, as the often violent March of Return protests seemed set to be renewed after a three-week hiatus. The demonstrations had been paused apparently in line with Israel's request as part of the negotiations over Gaza calm. Leaflets published by the terror group began circulating Tuesday among the residents of the coastal enclave, using images of protesters surrounded by thick black smoke.

The protest would be the first since the latest flare-up between Israel and the factions in the factions in the Strip (dubbed in Israel as Operation Black Belt). The cross-border round of fighting was sparked by the targeted killing of Islamic Jihad commander Baha Abu al-Ata in a predawn Israeli airstrike on his home.

Hamas stayed largely out of the fighting, while Islamic Jihad fired hundreds of rockets at Israeli population centers. The IDF responded with retaliatory airstrikes on the terror group's militants and infrastructure. Egyptian mediators managed to broker a truce between the two sides two days later.

Last Friday, 16-year-old Palestinian Fahed al-Astal died after he was shot in the stomach by IDF troops during an unsanctioned protest along the border fence. Four other people were wounded, Gaza officials said.

The five hurled improvised explosive devices at the IDF troops.

The protest took place despite Hamas's decision to suspend the weekly demonstration for the third consecutive week.

A member of the March of Return steering committee said after the death of the teen that Israel was responsible for the loss of life and called on protesters to turn out for a demonstration the following week.

The IDF said the claims regarding the circumstances of the boy's death would be investigated, adding that dozens of rioters had arrived the border independently, tried to sabotage the fence.