

March 19, 2015

Peter Wehner posts on Netanyahu's historic win and Obama's humiliating loss. *Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's stunning victory yesterday — polls at the end of last week had people writing off his chances — means he will become only the second person to be elected prime minister for a third term (the other being Israel's founder David Ben-Gurion). "King Bibi" has established himself as one of the dominant figures in the history of the modern state of Israel. Mr. Netanyahu is hardly a person without flaws. But for those of us who admire his toughness and moral clarity on world events — and who appreciate his obvious love for his nation and for ours — it was a splendid turn of events.*

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John Podhoretz has more on Bibi's win and the American president's loss.

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It worked. A bit. The Zionist Union won something like 24 seats, an improvement for its core Labor Party from 15 seats just two years ago. But the thing is, Israel's left doesn't have any answers to the nation's pressing problems either — and is seen as too ready to capitulate on hard-core defense and security issues.

So, in the final days of the election, trapped in his own backfield, the Zionist Union coming hard upon him as Obama and his minions cheered from the skyboxes, Bibi eluded its grasp and made his move. Love him or hate him, you have to admit that Bibi pulled off a pretty spectacular piece of footwork in the most exciting election finish I can remember.

More from **WSJ Editors**.

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Jennifer Rubin posts on President Petulant.

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There can be little doubt why relations are so poor. Obama shows more deference to the unelected dictatorships in China, Russia and Iran than he does to our closest Middle East ally. Unfortunately, that message rightly or wrongly is received by our foes that even when it comes to such an ally, the U.S. administration will kick its "friend" to the curb. That communication does more to weaken our bargaining hand than does a letter from 47 senators — which actually tried to impress on the Iranians they had to give us a better deal to get Congress on board.

There is no word as to whether Hillary Clinton has sent her congratulations. But it is clear she has decided to embrace the Obama foreign policy. With that goes the willingness to snub and undercut friends in search of deals with foes who will not keep their word. Nothing could speak more plainly about this administration than the Obama post-election sulking.

This is a good spot for a post from **Mark Steyn** on a lawyer who was killed in Pakistan. Remember the doctor who helped us find Bin Laden? Well, his lawyer was just gunned down in Peshawar.

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This is usually the point where I quote the great Bernard Lewis' words when we chanced to be on a panel discussion a few years back - that America risked being seen as harmless as an enemy and treacherous as a friend. And so it goes, from Iran to the Islamic State to the morgue of the Lady Reading Hospital in Peshawar.

Andrew Malcolm with late night humor.

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Contentions

Netanyahu's Historic Win — and Obama's Humiliating Loss

by Peter Wehner

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's stunning victory yesterday — polls at the end of last week had people writing off his chances — means he will become only the second person to be elected prime minister for a third term (the other being Israel's founder David Ben-Gurion). "King Bibi" has established himself as one of the dominant figures in the history of the modern state of Israel. Mr. Netanyahu is hardly a person without flaws. But for those of us who admire his toughness and moral clarity on world events — and who appreciate his obvious love for his nation and for ours — it was a splendid turn of events.

As for the current occupant of the White House, it was a disastrous one.

Barack Obama has an obsessive animosity when it comes to Prime Minister Netanyahu, which he has demonstrated time and again. So much so that Obama and his aides did everything they could to influence the Israeli election, from smearing Mr. Netanyahu — referring to him as a "coward" and a "[chickens***](#)" — to childishy elevating a difference over Netanyahu's speech to a joint session of Congress into a foreign policy crisis to perhaps [illegally funneling money](#) to oust the sitting leader of Israel. We know that Jeremy Bird, who served as Obama's deputy national campaign director in 2008 and his national campaign director in 2012, arrived in Israel in January to help unseat Mr. Netanyahu. This is all quite astonishing, even unprecedented. Benjamin Netanyahu may have won without the outside interference by Obama — but what Obama & Company did certainly helped.

I'm reminded of the self-inflicted "[stunning setback](#)" Mr. Obama suffered in 2009, when he and Mrs. Obama put their prestige on the line — they both flew to Copenhagen to make an appeal to the IOC — to get Chicago the 2016 Olympics. Chicago was eliminated on the first ballot. This time, the stakes were much higher and the damage done to Mr. Obama's reputation far greater.

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There's quite a pattern Mr. Obama has established in foreign policy during his presidency. He has failed in almost every instance, from his efforts at personal diplomacy to his policies. Remember the "[new beginning](#)" with the Arab and Muslim world? That claim now seems risible. Indeed, our relations with nation after nation — Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Libya, Yemen, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Russia, Ukraine, Poland, the Czech Republic, Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, China, Canada, Israel, India, Australia, Honduras, Brazil, Germany, and Great Britain, to name just a few — are worse now than they

were when Mr. Obama was sworn in as president in 2009. As for Mr. Obama's claim that al Qaeda was "decimated," in congressional testimony recently, Mr. Obama's Director of National Intelligence James R. Clapper Jr. said that terrorism trend lines were worse "than at any other point in history." And the terrorist group the president famously referred to as the "jayvee team" just last year is now the best-armed, best-funded terrorist group on earth, controlling "[a volume of resources and territory unmatched in the history of extremist organizations.](#)"

Mr. Obama's clumsy and malicious mishandling of relations with Israel, then, is but one brick in a wall of failure and infamy. The fact that Benjamin Netanyahu emerged victorious in his confrontation with Barack Obama — a confrontation whose root cause can be traced to Obama's hostility not just to Netanyahu but to Israel (a point I've elaborated on [here](#)) — is a heartening development in a world that is increasingly chaotic and violent.

NY Post

[Netanyahu gambles his career and scores breathtaking victory](#)

by John Podhoretz

When it comes to elections, Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu is the political equivalent of a scrambling quarterback. During the three-month election campaign that ended Tuesday night, the prime minister fell 20 yards behind the line of scrimmage before evading a savage blitz, escaped a catastrophic sack, then, at the last moment, turned upfield, crossed the line of scrimmage and galloped ahead for a huge gain.

Although Netanyahu's Likud Party only won about half the number of seats needed to secure a majority in Israel's parliament, it did so much better than anyone (including Bibi) expected that he seems to have triumphed in the goal he had set for himself last December when he broke up the government he had formed in 2013 and called new elections.

He did that because he wanted to strengthen his own hand and rid himself of two hostile coalition partners at the same time. This was a risky strategy, and it looked for quite a while like a disastrous one.

Throughout the final weeks, polling suggested Likud had fallen behind the center-left opposition, the Zionist Union.

If Likud had come in second Tuesday night, the ZU might have been given the first crack at forming a new government — and though it would have had profound difficulties assembling that new government, it's possible the ZU might have succeeded.

But had it failed, Bibi would then have been left with the horrid task of slapping together some kind of nightmarish contraption coalition to secure the 61 seats necessary for a majority. He would have been weak and his government would have been on the verge of collapse from the moment it was assembled.

Something else — something entirely unexpected — happened. Bibi's Likud was expected to secure 20 to 22 seats in the Knesset on Tuesday night. That's what all the polls showed. Instead, it appears Likud won 29, maybe 30 seats.

Not only was that shockingly good for Likud, it was a far stronger showing than in the last election, because in 2013, the party had merged with another called Yisrael Beytenu.

In 2013, Likud and Yisrael Beytenu together won about 23 percent of the vote. Tuesday night, Likud alone won 24 percent (or so the results seemed to suggest at press time).

Take it still further: Yisrael Beytenu evidently won six seats last night. So, if you unofficially reassemble the 2013 merger and unite its total with Likud's, their overall number is 36 to 37 seats — a nearly 15 percent gain in two years.

Bibi's path to forming a new government is clear and should be relatively easy, especially compared to last time.

He gambled his entire career and he won, just as he did with the speech in front of Congress earlier this month.

The three-month election process was heart-stopping and melodramatic, like an old "Batman" episode from the 1960s without the camp — including the startling role played by Special Guest Villain Barack Obama doing everything in his power to take down the man he seems to have chosen as his Enemy No. 1.

The president (or his team) shipped close campaign aides to Israel to help Bibi's opponents, and one State Department-funded group helped coordinate the line of attack.

The strategists going after him figured out that the key to the election was to stimulate what might be called "Bibi exhaustion" in the electorate. Their approach was to remind centrist voters of Bibi's failure to do anything about the nation's spiraling cost-of-living crisis, which had helped bring hundreds of thousands of Israelis into the streets in mass protests in 2011.

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WSJ - Editorial

[Netanyahu's Victory](#)

President Obama loses his bid to defeat a U.S. ally.

The Israeli election that looked like a cliffhanger when the polls closed on Tuesday had turned into a decisive victory for Benjamin Netanyahu and his Likud Party by Wednesday morning. With at least 29 seats in the parliament compared to 24 for the main center-left party, Israel's Prime Minister should be able to put together a ruling coalition of center-right parties that is more manageable than his last majority.

The victory is a remarkable personal triumph for Mr. Netanyahu, who is now Israel's second longest-serving Prime Minister after David Ben-Gurion. He gambled that he could assemble a more stable center-right coalition, as well as by giving a high-stakes speech to the U.S. Congress on Iran two weeks before the election, and in the final days stressing above all the security themes that must be Israel's abiding concern.

Mr. Netanyahu and Likud were trailing in the polls in the final week as the opposition stressed the rising cost of food and housing and an economy that had slowed to about 3% growth from near 6% in 2010. But in the closing days Mr. Netanyahu played up that foreigners (read: President Obama) wanted him defeated, and he rejected statehood for Palestinians, reversing a position he had taken in 2009. The reversal gave the impression of opportunism, even desperation, but it also rallied conservative voters who had hinted at growing "Bibi fatigue" after his long tenure as premier.

Right Turn

Obama's rude snub of Netanyahu

by Jennifer Rubin

Unlike Canadian Prime Minister [Stephen Harper](#) and British Prime Minister David Cameron, who, as heads of state of friendly countries are expected to do, offered [personal congratulations](#) to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on his victory, [President Obama has not](#).

First, an aide was dispatched to say the administration was giving Netanyahu "space" to form a government. (There is virtually no chance he won't be able to, with a margin of victory this large.) Netanyahu's main rival Isaac Herzog called Netanyahu to congratulate him and has told his followers they are going into opposition. But Obama still isn't giving up.

Next, we heard Obama might call in a few days — exactly when is not clear. And besides, unlike other heads of state, Obama had his [secretary of state make](#) a call to congratulate Netanyahu, a deliberate insult. The press secretary did say they would be calling to complain that Netanyahu issued a warning that the Arab list was turning out big (it was) and his supporters better get to the polls. (Understand that, unlike most of its neighbors, Israel has a parliament that matters, allows Arab citizens to vote and even allows parties that call for the dismemberment of Israel.) Always time to criticize and snipe.

At this point, Obama's gross pettiness and rudeness are there for all to see. There is little argument that he has been trying to oust Netanyahu, creating a federal case out of a speech and dispensing aides to badmouth him on background to docile reporters. Obama obviously was a "loser" in one sense, but unlike the real loser (Herzog), Obama cannot bear to call and congratulate the elected leader of the Jewish state. This is not just an insult to Netanyahu, but to the democratic country that elected him. For goodness sake, Obama has called [Vladimir Putin to congratulate him](#) after an election widely believed to be fraudulent.

There can be little doubt why relations are so poor. Obama shows more deference to the unelected dictatorships in China, Russia and Iran than he does to our closest Middle East ally. Unfortunately, that message rightly or wrongly is received by our foes that even when it comes to such an ally, the U.S. administration will kick its "friend" to the curb. That communication does

more to weaken our bargaining hand than does a letter from 47 senators — which actually tried to impress on the Iranians they had to give us a *better* deal to get Congress on board.

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Steyn On Line

The James Taylor Doctrine

by Mark Steyn

What was it James Taylor was flown by the State Department to sing to the Parisians a few weeks back? [Oh, yeah:](#)

*You just call out my name
And you know wherever I am
I'll come running to see you again
Winter, spring, summer, or fall
All you got to do is call
And I'll be there, yes I will
You've Got A Friend...*

Dr Shakil Afridi could have used a friend like that. Instead, he made friends with the Government of the United States, and a fat lot of good it did him. As I said on the radio [a couple of years ago](#):

When Joe Biden goes, 'Obama, he's the toughest hombre who ever lived...' This was the decision to take out bin Laden, to pull the trigger, as Obama did personally. 'This was the toughest decision any world leader has had to make in 2,000 years since Pontius Pilate decided to whack Jesus, this is the toughest decision any guy has ever had to take ...and in fact, the reality is the guy who took the tough decision was that little Pakistani doctor who made the decision to go to the Americans, and is now being tortured in jail. And Mister Tough Guy, Joe Biden, and the toughest hombre in a millennium, Obama, haven't done a thing about him, poor fellow.

Were it not for Dr Afridi, Osama bin Laden would still be alive and whooping it up with his pals in Abbottabad. Instead, President Obama got to do his "Osama is dead and al-Qaeda is on the run" routine right through the 2012 election and all the way until ISIS took Mosul. Meanwhile, Dr Afridi is about to begin the fourth year of his 33-year prison term. And the preening poseurs who run the global superpower have lifted not a finger to help him.

You've got a friend? In the Age of Obama, who would be a friend of America? Indeed, who would be a friend of a friend of America? Yesterday, Dr Afridi's lawyer was [shot dead in Peshawar](#):

"Two men on a motorcycle opened fire on Mr Samiullah who was travelling alone in his car near Bashir Bagh Aslam Dehri, killing him on the spot" said SSP (operations) Dr Mian Saeed.

He told Dawn that the attackers had fired four shots on the lawyer and the bullets hit him in the chest and abdomen. He said that it was early to determine the motive behind the murder.

Actually, it's not all that difficult to "[determine](#)":

The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan Jamaat ur Ahrar accepts responsibility for the attack on Samiullah, the lawyer of Shakil Afridi, who was co-operating with the killers of Sheikh Osama bin Laden. The enemy should remember that we will kill each and every one of the killers of each of our brothers.

All you gotta do is call, and the White House will put you on hold while you listen to *James Taylor's Greatest Hits*.

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IBD

Late Night Humor

by Andrew Malcolm

Gov. Scott Walker at the Gridiron Dinner: "Hillary Clinton isn't here tonight. When I asked why, I was told you couldn't afford her."

"When Jeb Bush was governor in Florida, he had to deal with a left-wing dictator just 90 miles from his border. I can relate: I have the same thing with Rahm Emanuel."

"The staff exodus in this administration has begun. Pretty soon, the only one left reporting to Valerie Jarrett will be President Obama."

Meyers: It's time for March Madness! The big tournament where you start out with 64 teams and in only three weeks, you're down to no girlfriend.

Conan: Last weekend was the LA Marathon, the only time of year you see someone running the streets of Los Angeles when it's not the end of a car chase.

Conan: Vladimir Putin is back in public after a mysterious 10-day absence. Putin said, "It took me that long to recover from 'The Bachelor' finale."

Meyers: After his mysterious absence, Putin appears in public for the first time in nearly two weeks. You know what that means: Boob job.

Meyers: Today is National Grammar Day. But come on, whom cares?

Conan: The Prime Minister of Ireland celebrated St. Patrick's Day at the White House. So finally, Secret Service agents had a drinking buddy.

Conan: A new report says the nation's air traffic control system may be vulnerable to hackers. One suspicious sign it's been hacked is if your Delta flight appears to be taking off on time.

Fallon: Obama's VA Secy. Robert McDonald is in hot water over his false claim that he served in the Special Forces. Turns out, it was Old Navy.

Fallon: Joe Biden spoke to the nation's largest gay rights group during a human rights convention on Friday. Then on Saturday, he spoke to them again to apologize for whatever he said in Friday's speech.

Fallon: Russia's economy is struggling and tensions are high in Ukraine, A new poll shows that Putin's approval rating is at 86%. Which sounds high until you consider there's also an 86% chance a Russian will be murdered if they answer that survey wrong.

Meyers: Ex-Obama press secretary Jay Carney joins Amazon. He says he's excited to work for someone who doesn't take six years to deliver.

Fallon: Michelle Obama travels to Japan and Cambodia this month to encourage education for girls. As opposed to the program we have in America that encourages girls to get an education: "The Bachelor."

Meyers: The Kardashians' new TV deal is four years for \$100 million. So let that be a lesson. If you really work hard and apply yourself, you are wasting your time.

Meyers: Plastic surgeons say women are shunning breast enhancement for butt enlargements. Instead of plastic surgery, they're just going to the Cheesecake Factory.

Conan: A man posted a YouTube video of himself taping Mentos to his entire body and then jumping into a bath of Coke Zero. So it's been another productive week for Joe Biden.

Meyers: The world's oldest person has turned 117. And she celebrated the same as last year — by driving her car into somebody's living room.

Meyers: Nancy Pelosi says she was "near tears" during Prime Minister Netanyahu's recent speech to Congress because it insulted American intelligence. Please nobody tell Nancy Pelosi about 'The Bachelor.'

Conan: A Nebraska man was arrested after police found a container of marijuana in his car labelled "Not Weed." The man's been found "Not Not Guilty."

Fallon: Russia is working with North Korea to encourage "collaboration and cooperation" between the two countries. They believe with Russia's economic power and North Korea's technology, they can be a real threat to 1987.

Conan: In New York, a couple who've been married 82 years celebrated a joint birthday together. Isn't that nice? The theme of the party was, "Who Are You Again?"

Meyers: Nazareth archaeologists find the house believed to be where Jesus grew up. And in the backyard they found the pool where he learned to walk.







THE CELEBRATION DINNER

