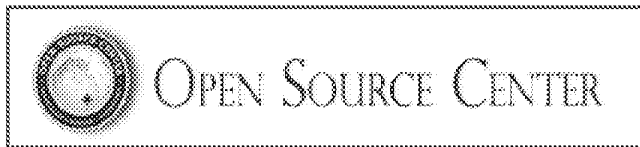


RELEASE IN PART B6

From: Finer, Jonathan J <FinerJJ@state.gov>
Sent: Monday, March 2, 2015 3:22 PM
To: SESTravel1, User <SESTravel1@state.gov>; Sherman, Wendy R <ShermanWR@state.gov>; Malley, R [redacted]
Subject: Fw: OSC: Israel: Roundup of Election-Related Developments 2 March 2015

B6

From: TA-Customers-Israel [mailto:TA-Customers-Israel@rccb.osis.gov]
Sent: Monday, March 02, 2015 03:19 PM Eastern Standard Time
Subject: OSC: Israel: Roundup of Election-Related Developments 2 March 2015



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Israel: Roundup of Election-Related Developments 2 March 2015

LIN2015030270371390 *OSC Summary* 02 Mar 15

[For a copy of the recording, contact OSC-Video@rccb.osis.gov or the OSC Customer Center at (800) 205-8615.]

The Israeli media on 2 March report the following developments pertaining to the Knesset elections slated for 17 March 2015:

Poll: Netanyahu Approval Drops to 39%; 33% Support Herzog

An unattributed report in commercial Channel 10 Television's website Nana10 in Hebrew says: "A poll conducted by TRI Strategic Studies for Nana10 showed a significant drop in Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's approval ratings, compared to those of Yitzhaq Herzog. Some 39 percent of respondents said that had elections been strictly between Netanyahu and Herzog and Livni they would have voted for the prime minister. Netanyahu continues to maintain a six percent lead over Herzog, whose approval stood at 33 percent, but still suffered a significant drop in support. In comparison, in last week's poll Netanyahu's approval stood at 49 percent versus Herzog's 31 percent. It appears that Herzog did not benefit from Netanyahu's drop in the poll. The number of those who did not support either one of the two rose from 16 percent to 20 percent."

"Asked who they trust to solve Israel's housing crisis, 30.3 percent replied Moshe Kahlon, 12.2 percent said former Finance Minister Ya'ir Lapid, 10 percent favored Economy Minister Naftali Bennett, 9.8

percent said Herzog and only nine percent said they trusted Netanyahu on the matter. Some 2.6 percent said they trusted Shas's Arye Der'i and only 1.9 percent favored Yisra'el Beytenu's Avigdor Lieberman."

Herzog Wants Direct Talks With Palestinians, Blames Netanyahu for Causing Friction With US

Right-of-center daily The Jerusalem Post Online in English includes a report by Gil Hoffman saying: "Zionist Union leader Yitzhaq Herzog explained why he never says the word 'peace' in any of his campaign events for the first time Sunday at a Tel Aviv International Salon event hosted by *The Jerusalem Post's* Lahav Harkov. When she asked why the word had left his lexicon, he said he was one of the last people to speak to Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin before he was assassinated and he had not given up his hope to achieve peace. 'I definitely yearn for peace,' he said. 'Clearly this is the dream. But we have to be realistic and not naive about it. I don't want to build expectations. I just want to do my best and move on.' Herzog said he would try to reignite a process using Egyptian and Jordanian support but that ultimately he wants to negotiate directly with the Palestinians, and that he is ready to go to Ramallah to try to reach a deal. 'It will be my role to change the lack of trust between the leaders and peoples,' he said. 'I don't believe in any unilateral withdrawal. The lessons from Gaza are learned.'

"When asked what land he would keep, he said that 'in the ideal world, I would like to keep it all.' He said he would keep the Ezyon Bloc, Ma'ale Adumim and Ari'el blocs, and that the Jordan River would be his security border. Herzog criticized Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu for 'causing friction with our only real staunch strategic ally,' the United States. He said one of his goals for his first 100 days in office would be to restore trust with Washington."

Livni Rejects Possibility of Forgoing Rotation With Herzog

State-funded but independent Voice of Israel in Hebrew at 1100 GMT reports: "MK Tzipi Livni of the Zionist Union rejects the possibility of forgoing the premiership rotation agreement with Yitzhaq Herzog, saying the public is supportive of the partnership between them. Livni told Esti Perez on Voice of Israel's midday newsreel that Herzog himself this morning remarked this partnership has sparked a new hope among the Israeli public. According to Livni, certain elements with a vested interest are those who have raised the idea that she give up the rotation agreement with Herzog, if he wins the elections."

Lapid: Yesh Atid Not Committed To Recommending Leader of Largest Party

Jonathan Lis and Yarden Skop report in left-of-center daily Haaretz.com in English: "MK Ya'ir Lapid, chairman of the Yesh Atid party, will not necessarily recommend the head of the faction that wins the most Knesset seats in the upcoming election for the post of prime minister. In answer to a question from *Haaretz* at an event in Tel Aviv during which the Yesh Atid platform was unveiled, Lapid said the party was no longer committed, as it was in the last election, to recommending the leader of the largest faction as the candidate to form the next government.

"The fact that Lapid is remaining ambiguous as to who he will recommend as prime minister plays in his favor at our expense,' a source in Zionist Union said. 'Many voters who do not want Netanyahu are going to him (Lapid) instead of to us, although Lapid has so far not counted out supporting Netanyahu,' the source added."

Election Campaign Videos

A video posted on the "Benjamin Netanyahu" Facebook page states: "1981. Saddam Husayn builds a nuclear reactor. Begin faces a momentous decision: Should he act to destroy the reactor and endanger ties with Washington? Begin orders the strike on the reactor. Would we be here today if Begin hadn't

done the right thing? Only Likud. Only Netanyahu." [Click here](#) to view the 30-second video in Hebrew with Russian subtitles.

In a video posted on the "Naftali Bennett" Facebook page entitled "True Story, Part Four, With Naftali Bennett," Bennett is shown reading "The Giving Tree" by Y. Herzog, but he puts it down and addresses the viewer, saying: "Buji tells us that we need to give Judea and Samaria to the Arabs to save Israel's international standing and prevent international isolation. Buji, let's tell the truth." Bennett shares the example of Gaza, where Israel did "exactly what the world wanted" by retreating to the 1967 lines, withdrawing all its troops, forcibly evacuating 8,000 Israelis, and giving the whole territory to "our moderate partner, Abu-Mazin [Mahmud Abbas]. The left's plan exactly." Since then, Israel has only reaped trouble from Gaza, such as rockets, and "the three worst blows to Israel's international standing in the past decade have actually occurred in Gaza, not in Judea and Samaria.... Anyone who thinks that giving more and more land to the Arabs will cause the world to somehow respect us and love us more is simply mistaken.... Jewish Home and I will not give even one more centimeter of land to the Arabs. It's over. And that, Buji, is the true story." [Click here](#) to view the 2-minute 10-second video in Hebrew.

In a video posted on the "Yesh Atid" Facebook page, Ya'ir Lapid addresses the viewer in English with a "special message" for immigrants to Israel. He says that in the beginning of the state, Israel fought to make the best home possible for the people while also defending itself, but since then, Israel has lost its way. "Yesh Atid was established to get us back on track." He describes how his party has been working to improve the social aspects of Israel. He urges immigrants, who are by nature idealists, to vote for Yesh Atid so it can continue restoring Israel's pride. [Click here](#) to view the 1-minute 36-second video in English.

A video posted on the "Avigdor Liberman" Facebook page features MK Orly Levi-Abekasis, who describes the poverty situation in Israel and her initiative to legislate supervision for the price of fruits and vegetables, to avoid inflated prices. She states that the bill passed in the Ministerial Legislation Committee despite strong opposition from the finance minister, who later put cream prices under supervision. "So what's more important? Fruits and vegetables? Or cream?" The video concludes: "Orly Levi is fighting for you. Ya'ir Lapid is fighting for cream." [Click here](#) to view the 59-second video in Hebrew.

A video posted on the "Shas Party Official Page" on Facebook shows footage of deceased Shas party spiritual leader Rabbi Ovadya Yosef praying, studying, and so on. The video concludes by saying: "People who love the master vote Shas." [Click here](#) to view the 1-minute video in Hebrew.

A video posted on the "Eli Yishay" Facebook page shows footage of deceased Rabbi Ovadya Yosef blessing Eli Yishay, saying good things about him, and of Yishay together with Rabbi Yosef. The video then plays the Yahad party anthem and shows Eli Yishay meeting with all different sorts of Israelis. The accompanying post states: "All the streams [of Judaism], all the different yarmulkes, all the people together." [Click here](#) to view the 1-minute 39-second video in Hebrew.

A video posted on the "Meretz" Facebook page shows famous Israeli actors, writers, and musicians addressing the viewer. They state: "Every two years, a war breaks out here and children die for nothing, and you're still undecided? When you say that children from both sides deserve to live, you get cursed and threatened, and you're still undecided? Women who complain about harassment and rape are persecuted when they tell the truth, anti-Semitic propaganda videos suggest that you hang yourself, you're scared to go to a protest because you might be beaten, and you're still undecided? So instead of making a strategic vote, on election day, stand erect, stand proud. Vote for what you believe in.... Vote Meretz." [Click here](#) to view the 47-second video in Hebrew.

A video posted on the "V15 -- Victory 2015" Facebook page shows a person going to the polls, while Binyamin and Sarah Netanyahu pack their things. When the voter casts her ballot, the door to the prime minister's residence slams shut behind the Netanyahus. At the end of the video, the polling official tells the voter: "Thank you. Good bye." The accompanying post states: "On 17 March, we'll tell Bibi thank you, good bye." [Click here](#) to view the 1-minute 8-second video in Hebrew.

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Sent By: Yaels