

# Unlike Meir during the Yom Kippur War, Netanyahu is acting with ignoble intent

By Amnon Cavari  
and Chaim Weizmann

In his behavior, Benjamin Netanyahu recalls that of Golda Meir on the eve of the Yom Kippur War 50 years ago. However, unlike Meir, Netanyahu will not be able to claim he didn't know or that he had been guided by the good of the country.

During the summer of 1973, there were plenty of indications that neighboring countries were about to attack Israel, but Meir as prime minister disregarded them all. There were also several people in Israel — although neither numerous nor in the higher echelons — and from the United States who sounded the alarm about the impending danger. Yet the cabinet, with Meir at its helm, chose not to listen. The hubris, the sense of euphoria and the belief in the strength of Israel to handle any threat thwarted the chance to avert one of the worst disasters to ever befall the state of Israel.

Today, there are also plenty of indications that the regime coup led by Netanyahu is about to destroy Israeli democracy and cause a national disaster, yet the prime minister ignores them all. A vast majority of senior public figures from various fields, past and present — public service, academia, the economy, the defense apparatus, the education and health care systems, scholars and artists — have openly expressed grave concerns and led mass demonstrations against the disastrous measures initiated by the current government. Warnings of an imminent disaster have also been voiced by world leaders, with envoys from the U.S. at the forefront.

Still, Netanyahu shuts his ears



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaks during a state memorial ceremony for his late predecessor Golda Meir in November 2018 in Jerusalem. **MENACHEM KAHANA/GETTY-AFP**

and keeps repeating the mantra that nothing will happen. As he assures President Joe Biden that Israel will not turn into a dictatorship, his aggressive legislation machine will keep pushing ahead at full force, drafting laws that would turn the Israeli regime into an authoritarian one.

The hubris that prevailed 50 years ago prevented Meir from giving due consideration to the warnings, admittedly few, regarding the preparations for war made by Egypt and Syria. The war broke, and Israel was forced to its knees. Yet, at the time, Israelis abroad heeded their country's emergency call and rushed back in droves to fight for its

survival. At the time, other countries headed by the U.S. stood by Israel, sending essential equipment or expressing their support. At the time, after suffering 2,656 fatalities, 7,251 wounded and 294 prisoners of war, Israel managed to rise from the ashes, grow and thrive.

Today, Israelis are asking themselves if this is the country in which they wish to raise their children, to send them to serve in its army. Other countries led by the U.S. express their dismay at the government's measures. And if Netanyahu succeeds in his plan to destroy Israel's democracy, it would be much harder to rebuild from the ruins.

To justify herself, Meir claimed that she had never worn military uniforms, had no understanding of national security issues and relied on her generals. Even if this excuse is acceptable for Meir, which is highly doubtful, there will be no way for Netanyahu to claim he didn't know. He knows.

He takes pride in knowing. He is the country's most senior politician. He has served as prime minister longer than any of his predecessors, and he understands economic, security and social issues perhaps better than most, if not all, other members of the Knesset, Israel's parliament. He knows all too well the implications of the withdrawal

of finances from Israel, of the severe blow to the country's reputation as a startup nation that is subjected to the rule of law and worthy of investment. He knows full well what all this means for the cost of living in Israel. He knows the meaning of the loss of shared values that hold a society together and the Israeli bond that has worked a real miracle here and established Israel's place among the world's nations. He knows, and he ignores.

Meir ended up having to resign from her role as prime minister, following the release of the findings of the Agranat Commission, a national panel of inquiry. This time, there will be no commission of inquiry. Since when do authoritarian regimes establish commissions to investigate their own deeds?

To Meir's credit, she was not facing three indictments for bribery, fraud and breach of trust. She was guided by the good of the country. Yet she made a horrible mistake. Netanyahu, on the other hand, violates the fundamental contract between the people and their state by collaborating with members of his coalition — whose interests are antithetical to the core values of the state of Israel — in unilaterally altering the form of governance, thereby posing a real threat to the social, economic and security resilience of Israel.

Netanyahu endangers democracy knowingly and intentionally and not because of an error in professional judgment. This is unforgivable.

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