

Sheldon's Stooges

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IN JAPAN IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS, Binyamin Netanyahu would by now have committed hara-kiri.

In England at that time, the monarch would have appointed him governor of the most remote little island in the Pacific Ocean.

In Israel, his popularity rating is bound to go up—because in our country the old adage is getting a new twist: Nothing Succeeds Like Failure.

AND WHAT a failure! Wow!!!

He has practically declared war on the President of the United States, the Leader of the Free World, the Supreme Protector of the Jewish State.

Not so long ago, one would have thought this impossible. But nothing is impossible for Binyamin Netanyahu.

For anyone just arrived from the planet Mars, here is a brief summary of Israel's dependence on the US: it gets from it the bulk of its heavy arms and does not have to pay for them, it can depend on it to veto all UN Security Council resolutions that condemn Israel's deeds and misdeeds, it receives from it billions of dollars every year although the Israeli economy is flourishing.

There is another benefit which is often overlooked. Since the world believes that both houses of the US Congress are totally subservient to Israel, all countries pay Israel for access to Congress. One has to bribe the doorkeeper to get in.

For an Israeli prime minister to start a quarrel with the President of the US looks like sheer lunacy—as indeed it is.

Yet Netanyahu is not insane, though his actions suggest that. He is not even a fool.

So what the hell does he think he is doing?

THERE ARE several possible explanations I can think of.

One is pampering the Israeli public. Far from creating a New Jew as Zionism promised, the Old Jew dominates Israel. The Old Jew believes that the entire world is anti-Semitic, and any new evidence fills him with satisfaction. You see? The Goyim haven't changed at all.

Netanyahu's popularity ratings are bound to rise with every new manifestation of foreign hostility. If even the Americans, who for so long pretended to be the best friends of Israel, sell us out to the anti-Semitic Iranians, we need

a strong and steadfast leader. In short—a Netanyahu.

Another plausible explanation for Netanyahu's behavior may be his genuine belief that no US senator or representative would ever dare to buck AIPAC's orders, knowing that this would be the end of his (or her) political career. Like the worst of the anti-Semites, Netanyahu believes that the Jews rule the world, or at least the US Congress. At the crucial moment, Congress will vote for AIPAC, against the US president.

Another explanation may be, paradoxically, a blind belief in President Obama's integrity. Netanyahu thinks that he can hit him on the head, spit in his eye, kick his behind, and still Obama will act coolly, rationally, and support Israel all the way, except on the Iranian deal. He will go on sending arms and dollars, vetoing Security Council resolutions, receiving phone calls from Israel in the middle of the night.

You know how these Americans are. Subservient. Especially black ones.

BUT THERE may be another explanation, that trumps all others.

Affronting the US president, his administration and his party, Netanyahu is gambling with our future. Which brings us to the emperor of the gambling world, the king of Las Vegas, the prince of Macao: Sheldon Adelson.

Adelson does not hide his support for Netanyahu the man, the family and the party. He spends huge sums of money on a Hebrew daily newspaper that is distributed gratis to Israelis, whether they want it or not. It is now the largest-circulation paper in Israel, and devoted personally to Netanyahu and his wife. It has no other purpose.

Yet Adelson seems to have no real interest in Israel. He does not live here, even part time. So what is he getting in return?

Adelson has bought Netanyahu for one single purpose: to place a stooge of his in the White House. It is an aim that any other multi-billionaire cannot even dream of.

To achieve this aim, Adelson needs to use the Republican Party as a ladder. He has to select its candidate for the presidency, derail Hillary Clinton and win the elections. To succeed in all these tasks, he has to mobilize the immense power of the pro-Israel lobby over the US Congress and destroy President Obama.

The first step in this long march is to defeat the Iranian deal. Netanyahu is just a cog in this grand design. But a very important cog.

Does this look like a caricature of Der Stürmer, the infamous anti-Semitic Nazi rag, or, worse, like a page out of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, the notorious anti-Semitic forgery? It is the classical anti-Semitic picture: the ugly finance-Jew striving for world mastery.

For an Israeli, there is something revolting in this picture. The Zionist vision was born out of the total rejection of this caricature. Jews would cease dealing in stocks and shares and money-lending. Jews would till the land with the sweat of their brow, do productive manual work, reject all kinds of parasitic speculations. This was considered such a high ideal that it justified even the displacement of the indigenous Arab population.

And here we are, a state following the orders of an international casino mogul whose line of business is perhaps the most unproductive in the cosmos. Sad.

IS THERE a valiant opposition to this course in Israel? None. Literally none.

In all my long life in Israel I have never seen anything as close to a total absence of opposition as we have now.

A few voices in Haaretz, some solitary pronouncements on the extreme leftist fringe, and that's that.

Apart from these (including Gush Shalom), nothing except thunderous applause for Netanyahu or the dreadful silence of the graveyard.

The treaty is "bad". Not just bad, but "catastrophic". Not just catastrophic, but "one of the most terrible disasters in the entire history of the Jewish people". Something close to a "second Holocaust". (I am not making this up.)

Netanyahu's shallow arguments are accepted as sacred truths, like the utterances of the other great Jewish prophets. Nobody bothers to ask the relevant question: Why?

The sun rises in the morning. The rivers flow into the sea. Iran will build an atomic bomb and drop it on us, even though it will thereby bring upon itself a historic disaster. The mullahs are Nazis. The treaty is another Munich agreement. Obama is the new Neville Chamberlain, only black.

Nobody takes the trouble to argue for these assertions. Things are self-evident. Day is day and night is night.

I HAVE seen many situations of a near unanimous public opinion in my life, especially in times of war. But in all of my life I have never experienced such a situation of total unanimity, of total absence of doubting and questioning,

as now.

This situation is not without its absurdities. For example: the Iranian Supreme Leader is obviously faced with his own extremists, who accuse him of selling out to the American Satan. To appease them, he has to claim that the treaty is a tremendous victory for the Islamic Republic, that he has brought the US (and Israel) to their knees. The huge Netanyahu propaganda machine is taking up these quotes and selling them as gospel truths. Everyone knows that Iranians always lie, but this time they tell it as it is.

Yair Lapid, the leader of a shrunken "centrist" party now in opposition (the Orthodox did not allow Netanyahu to bring him into the government) denounces the treaty as a historic disaster for the Jewish people. This being so, he asks loudly, why is Netanyahu not compelled to resign after his failure to prevent it? The more so since there is a much more able leader ready to take his place and lead the fight, a man named Yair Lapid.

There is indeed something of a paradox in Netanyahu's situation: if the treaty is such a historic disaster, "one of the worst in Jewish history", why is Netanyahu continuing in his job?

TO THROW out a prime minister, a country needs an opposition to take his place. Actually, that is the main job of the opposition.

Not here.

The Leader of the Opposition (an official title in Israel) condemns the treaty in as strong terms as Netanyahu himself. He has volunteered to go to the USA to help the fight against it. His competitor, Yair Lapid, the son of a far-out nationalist, is even more extreme than him. The leader of the third opposition party is Avigdor Lieberman, compared to whom Netanyahu is a leftist softy. There is, of course, a fourth opposition party—the joint Arab one—but who listens to them?

One would suppose that, faced with such a historic disaster, Israel would be alive with debates about the treaty. But how can one have a debate, if everybody agrees? I have heard not a single real discussion on TV, nor read one in the printed papers, nor on the internet. Here and there a small whisper of doubt, but a debate? Nowhere!

Indeed, one can live happily in Israel for days and hear no mention of this historic disaster at all. The price of cottage cheese evokes more emotion.

So we are happily moving towards disaster—unless one of Sheldon's stooges, with the help of Bibi, enters the White House.