

Interview

Israel & Iran: Bibi Netanyahu's War Dream

Saturday 9 May 2015, by [MACHOVER Moshé](#), [WEISSMAN Suzi](#) (Date first published: 1 May 2015).

SUZI WEISSMAN INTERVIEWED Moshe Machover, a founder of the Israeli Socialist Organization (Matzpen) in the 1960s, for her program "Beneath the Surface" on KPFK Pacifica Radio in Los Angeles, March 30, 2015. An edited transcript is online [[1](#)]. The following brief excerpt discusses the reasons behind Israel's campaign against the Iran nuclear deal.

Suzi Weissman: You may have heard some commentators saying that (Netanyahu's) appearance at Capitol Hill was a ploy in order to win the elections. (Rather) I think he provoked the elections in order to be able to appeal in this performance on Capitol Hill, and make a pact — an overt pact with the extreme right of the Republican Party — in order to scupper the deal with Iran.

Moshe Machover: I think that Netanyahu has made a very calculated gamble. First, that he (would) win the elections, which he did, and form a narrower right-wing government...And second, that he has made a very marked change in Israeli relations with the United States, which were formerly based on a sort of bipartisanship, not favoring one U.S. party over another.

He has made an overt pact with the American right, and especially the right wing of the Republican Party. His calculation is that the ascendancy of the GOP is irreversible, or is going to be there for a long time, and that Obama is a dead man walking.

No Israeli Zionist leader is going to break the alliance with the United States. The question is, with what forces within the United States is the alliance being made? And his calculation is that, as I said: Obama is now out. Of course he's incensed Obama, but what is Obama going to do? His hands are rather tied by the majority in both houses of Congress.

Israel is not merely concerned with its immediate neighborhood and the colonization of the West Bank and so on. It's all that, but as part of this, Israel is also a regional power. You have to understand, in the pecking order of the Middle East, Israel is near the top of the pyramid, second only to the big boss, which is the United States.

Now, the thing with Iran is not that Netanyahu's seriously afraid of an Iranian bomb; this is a lie. It is clear that what he said in Congress and what he said in the United Nations in October 2012 are lies. But he is seriously concerned about Iran in a different sense; and the negotiations with Iran are not really about nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons are only a symbolic way of depicting the negotiations for the consumption of the public. What is really at issue is the place of Iran in the pecking order of the Middle East.

SW: So it's not about carrying out a surgical strike on Iran, but it's about not letting the United States use Iran as a partner to get more stability in the Middle East. Is that what you're saying?

MM: That's exactly it. Everybody realizes, including the Iranian leaders, that the top of the pyramid is the United States. The question is, what place will Iran occupy in this pecking order? The deal that

is now being hatched is to give Iran a respectable place in this pecking order. But if so, that would actually, relatively speaking, downgrade the importance of Israel. You see? It would, in some sense, erode Israel's position as second to top dog.

Netanyahu is obsessed with this, and is prepared to go even to war in order to prevent any such thing. The only kind of deal he is prepared to accept is one in which Iran is the very bottom of the pecking order. Plus, he has some additional reasons for wanting a war with Iran. Something I've been saying for a number of years — and there is good documentary proof of this — is that if a war with Iran causes a conflagration in the whole region, he may actually want to use it as a smokescreen for a major ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from the West Bank.

P.S.

* "Bibi Netanyahu's War Dream". From Against the Current n°176, May/June 2015.
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Footnotes

[1] See <http://www.solidarity-us.org/site/node/4400>