

Haaretz English Editor-in-chief. Double trouble: Trump and Netanyahu meet again

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'Congratulations on history's greatest comeback!' That was the breathless response by Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to Donald Trump's second presidential election victory. And Netanyahu knows something about historic comebacks.

Most recently, he made it back to power after a year in opposition while facing a criminal trial and subjecting Israelis to five elections in four years. But his most 'historic' comeback has been his political survival, his rehabilitation in the polls and his intensifying centralization of power since presiding over Israel's greatest calamity, October 7.

And Netanyahu made a further move to bolster his single-handed grip on power yesterday, conveniently timed for while America was gripped by the presidential election results. Netanyahu's firing of Defense Minister Yoav Gallant during wartime, the last gate-keeping adult left in a senior position in the government, was a clear statement of purpose: Israel's government solely exists to sustain, protect and defend the prime minister's political career.

Israel is ruled by a more-than-simply-aspiring autocrat and annexationist touting "total victory" while America will soon be governed by a similarly authoritarian and exclusionist MAGA demagogue. How these two disastrous leaders' worldviews and policies will coalesce or conflict will have a fateful impact on Israel, the Palestinians and the wider Middle East - from the wars devastating the region to the nature of the societies that will emerge in their wake.

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