

Trump-Netanyahu Strategy and the Future of Middle East Stability

Netanyahu's surprise decision to fire Defense Minister Yoav Gallant has strained Israel's defense strategy. Netanyahu cited a "crisis of trust" between him and Gallant, adding that "during the last months this trust cracked." Gallant was a critical voice in negotiating a hostage deal and reducing military exemptions for ultra-Orthodox Israelis. His removal comes as Donald Trump returns to the U.S. presidency, vowing to help "finish the job" in Gaza. Together, these moves signal a shift in U.S.-Israel relations and Middle East stability.

Protests erupted across Israel following Gallant's dismissal, with crowds gathering outside Netanyahu's residence, shouting "shame!" and blocking roads in central Tel Aviv. Opposition leader Yair Lapid called Netanyahu's actions "madness," while former army chief Gadi Eisenkot criticized the move as "irresponsible" and accused Netanyahu of prioritizing politics over national security. Gallant's dismissal reflects a long-standing ideological divide: while he pushed for a ceasefire and hostages' release, Netanyahu's hardline coalition opposes any pause in military actions.

One scenario is Trump advising Netanyahu to finish the job before he formally takes office, which could lead to a steep escalation in November and December as Israel moves to weaken Iran and its Axis of Resistance. Trump's return to the presidency could reinforce Netanyahu's strategy, strengthening U.S. backing for Israel's military actions. A strong pro-Israel advocate, Trump criticized Biden's ceasefire push, arguing it would restrict Israel's actions and allow Hamas to regroup. He vowed to "end the suffering in Lebanon" and urged Netanyahu to "finish the job" in Gaza, without explaining how.

Gallant's call for hostage returns and opposition to reoccupation clashed with figures like Itamar Ben Gvir, who push for permanent control over Gaza. Trump's vague remarks about Gaza's potential, suggesting developers could make it "better than Monaco," stand in sharp contrast to his more forceful rhetoric urging Netanyahu to escalate military actions. This alignment indicates an intensifying Israeli strategy, though Trump's approach toward Iran remains unpredictable, influenced by his base's isolationist leanings and recent Iranian threats targeting his administration.

Israel's shifting defense strategy under Netanyahu may intensify risks across Israel's fronts with Gaza, Lebanon, and Iran, as far-right pressures and unresolved regional hostilities escalate tensions. Coupled with domestic dissent, the Middle East is bracing for a volatile period ahead with implications for stability and global energy security.