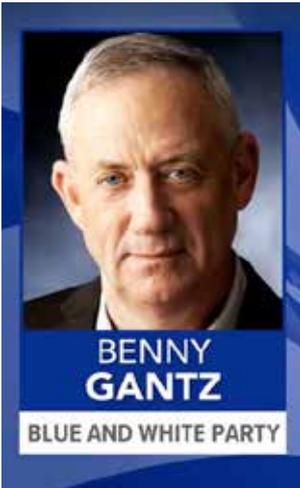




November 2019 / Jewish Year 5780

Now Gantz Has a Chance – ?

Israel's former military chief Benny Gantz was tasked Wednesday with forming the next government, but he has few options after last month's elections left him in a near tie with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.



After Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu failed to form a government built on a large right-wing bloc, rival Benny Gantz faces similarly steep odds, raising the possibility that Israel will hold a third election in less than a year.

President Reuven Rivlin formally granted the mandate to Gantz, who will have 28 days to form a coalition. It is the first time in over a decade that anyone besides Netanyahu has been given the task.

After accepting the mandate at Rivlin's official residence in Jerusalem, Gantz commented, "I will invite all the parties that are represented in the Knesset, even those who will not be in the government. I will first turn to the Likud and to its head Netanyahu and offer for him to be part of that government," *Times of Israel* reported.

Gantz, a lifelong military man, has presented himself as a practical leader who can bridge Israel's many divisions and address the various security threats it faces.

Gantz presents himself as a more trustworthy alternative to PM Netanyahu, and may hope to evoke past generals who became statesmen, including Moshe Dayan, Yitzhak Rabin and Ariel Sharon.

But he faces steep odds in every possible path to forming a government. He has been endorsed by just 54 lawmakers representing an array of parties that are unlikely to sit together in a coalition.

Both Gantz and Netanyahu say they favor a national unity government. Together, Netanyahu's Likud and Gantz's Blue and White control a solid 65-seat majority. But the two men are divided over who should lead any new government.

Netanyahu has insisted he head the government, at least for the first two years, and that it include his right-wing allies, conditions that Gantz has repeatedly rejected.

Netanyahu also has accusations of corruption, which will be litigated in the coming weeks, and Gantz has said Netanyahu should resolve his legal troubles before returning to the top post.

Blue and White nevertheless invited Likud negotiators to a meeting planned for Thursday. Gantz could potentially break up the right-wing alliance and recruit some of the smaller parties to his coalition. But that might be seen as a major betrayal by those parties' voters.

Another option would be to form a minority government with Avigdor Lieberman, who emerged as kingmaker after his party won eight seats and has refused to endorse either Gantz or Netanyahu. Gantz might be able to convince the Arab Joint List, which won 13 seats, to support the coalition from the outside. That would bring down Netanyahu, but result in a highly unstable government. It's also far from clear that Lieberman, a nationalist with a history of harsh rhetoric toward the Arab minority, would support such a scheme. No Arab party has ever sat in an Israeli government.

The political deadlock dates back to April, when Lieberman refused to join a right-wing coalition under Netanyahu, denying him a majority. In response, parliament voted to dissolve itself, leading to an unprecedented repeat election in September. A similar scenario could play out again.

The political deadlock has delayed the Trump administration's release of its long-awaited peace plan. The Palestinians have already vowed to ignore the plan, a move consistent with decades of Palestinian rejectionism. (*Associated Press, World Israel News, October 23, 2019*)

Netanyahu celebrates 70th birthday with former IDF comrades

The celebration was held at the Crusader fortress at Kochav Hayarden National Park, where 'Team Bibi' staged its final military exercise 50 years ago.

On Tuesday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu celebrated his 70th birthday with his former comrades from the IDF General Staff Reconnaissance Unit.

This group of former soldiers is often referred to as "Team Bibi" because Netanyahu served as their commander. "Fifty years ago, in the southern approaches to Afula, I received these boys. They have not changed much, I must say," Netanyahu stated in his speech. "We marched 120 kilometers in order to reach the unit. We started a long training march ahead of the important missions we carried out as a team. Two of us are absent, Udi and Uri who have passed away, but the unity has been maintained over the years. This cohesiveness, this friendship, this fellowship, is exceptional," he added.

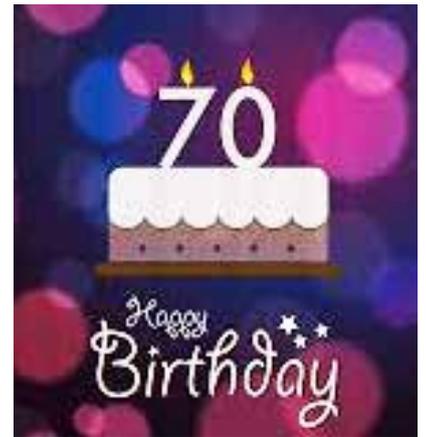
During the celebration, Netanyahu joined his fellow comrades in singing the unit's song and was given a medal, inscribed with the words: "To Bibi, marking 50 years since the unit was formed. From your soldiers in Team Bibi Netanyahu. Summer of 1969-Summer of 1972."

"I would be happy if I could tell you everything that we did. But here, in this place, Kochav Hayarden, was the conclusion of an important exercise that took several days. They carried out all kinds of missions and reached this point where they received the unit insignia," Netanyahu said. "I had the privilege of having such soldiers. I have had the privilege that we have kept this bond, a very special and very strong bond." (WIN Staff).

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. May all go well for those who love you. May there be peace within your walls. May all go well within your houses. I will now say, "May peace be within you," for the good of my brothers and my friends" (Psalm 122:6-8).

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Happy 70th Birthday Bibi!

Christian Friends of Israel • A Personal Invitation

Come to the Feast! 25, 26, 27, May 2020

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"Meat in Due Season" Matthew 24:45

PLACE:
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Come to Feast on God's Word
from top speakers
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