

On Oct. 7th Anniversary: Time to Rethink Netanyahu's 'Unpopularity'?

As Israelis commemorate the Fall Feasts and mark the first anniversary of the somber, world-changing Hamas massacre and kidnappings on October 7th, 2023, the prevailing media narrative in Israel and around the world has suggested that it was only a matter of time before Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government would topple under the weight of the events. It isn't true.

In a column this week, JNS commentator Caroline Glick took a Fox News anchor to task for referring to Netanyahu's "unpopularity."

Glick asked, "How is it that she is unaware that Netanyahu is the most popular prime minister Israel has had in ages?"

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Glick cited a Direct Polls tracking survey from two days after the Israel Defense Forces eliminated Hezbollah leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, showing that for the first time since October 7th, the coalition government would gain a Knesset majority if the election were held today.

"As for Netanyahu, his popularity has reached epic proportions in Israel's polarized political jungle, enjoying higher ratings than his top two rivals combined. In head-to-head matchups, he leads (Benny) Gantz in favorability 52% to 25% and (Yair) Lapid 54% to 24%," Glick noted.

The poll numbers were certainly dismal for the Netanyahu coalition in the weeks and even months after the shock of the

attack, as Israelis struggled to comprehend how the territory around the Gaza Strip could be left so defenseless against a low-tech terrorist assault.

In a country with a population under 10 million, everyone knew someone with a loved one who was killed or kidnapped, or whose son, daughter, spouse, or sibling had been called up to fight in the Gaza streets and tunnels.

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Taking a cue from the Biden administration and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, the Knesset opposition openly called for Netanyahu to be replaced while the war in Gaza raged.

Gargantuan crowds assembled weekly—sometimes daily—in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, demanding a deal with Hamas for the hostages and the end of the Netanyahu government, lending credibility to the narrative that the crowds represented the majority of Israelis. They never did – even if majorities at one point or another wanted Israel to make great sacrifices to free the hostages.

The futility of the White House's push to focus on a Palestinian state and what comes "the day after" the war in Gaza was magnified by events such as the brutal Hamas execution of six hostages, including American-Israeli Hersh Goldberg-Polin.

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