

“AN EXPERT VIEW FROM ISRAEL”

Series Report #99

SUMMARY OF A ‘MIDDLE EAST FORUM’ WEBINAR ENTITLED ‘ISRAEL UPDATE’



28 DECEMBER 2022

In a brief ‘Webinar’ session organized by the Washington based MEF, Ashley Perry, an adviser to Israel’s minister of foreign affairs and deputy prime minister in 2009-15, provides weekly updates on Israeli politics.

SUMMARY OF ASHLEY PERRY’S COMMENTS

- Perry began his weekly briefing by focussing entirely on the formation of the new Israeli government headed by Benjamin Netanyahu which is now due to be sworn in at 11 am on 30 December.
- Perry said that this issue which has been at the centre of all considerations in the past several months is now expected to proceed without any further surprises, given that the coalition guidelines have all been made fully clear and acceptable to all parties (including the passage of certain laws that were required for extending the authority of both Ben-Gvir and Smotrich and removing legal barriers for the appointment of Aryeh Deri to the new cabinet).
- Perry noted that most of the key positions were now filled and said that there would be a rotational system for both the office of the foreign and Finance Ministers. The position of Foreign Minister is expected to go for the first 2 years to Likud MK (Member of Knesset) Eli Cohen before being turned over to another Likud MK, Israel Katz.
- Netanyahu has also announced that his long-time confidant Ron Dermer — seen initially as a top candidate for the job of Foreign Minister — would instead be *Strategic Affairs Minister* within the Prime Minister’s Office.
- The position of Finance Minister will also be divided on a rotational basis between Smotrich and Deri.
- Perry noted that the allocation of jobs in the new cabinet had been a strenuous affair and has caused a great deal of resentments within the Likud party (coming specially from the likes of former UN Ambassador Danny Danon).
- Perry ended by saying that from next week, focus will revert to Netanyahu’s plans for improving the economy and extending Israel’s foreign policy objectives headed by his wish for bringing Saudi Arabia into the Abraham Accords.

