## Snapback now

written by David M. Weinberg | 29.08.2025

The so-called "snapback" mechanism for sanctions against Iran was triggered several days ago. But the three European countries who made the call – Britain, France, and Germany (the E-3) – may yet fudge the issue and fritter away Western leverage on Iran. They are talking about giving Iran an extension, up to six months' grace to reach understandings about curbs on its nuclear bomb and missile programs.

That would be a whopping mistake. With Iran charred by the emphatic Israeli and American military strikes of July and weakened by economic and domestic upheavals, the Europeans should be toughly negotiating Iran down and away from its aggressive capabilities and postures, not giving the Islamic Republic a sugarcoated lifeline.

A BIT OF BACKGROUND is necessary. Between 2006 and 2010, the UN Security Council passed six tranches of sanction resolutions against Iran because of its nuclear weapon and ballistic missile programs.

Then in 2015, the P5+1 (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council: Britain, France, Russia, China, and America, plus Germany) reached an agreement with Iran called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) to limit Iran's nuclear program in exchange for massive sanctions relief and the release of billions of dollars of escrowed Iranian funds. This was US President Obama's signature foreign policy "achievement."

But an emergency brake was built into the JCPOA that allows for swift reimposition of United Nations sanctions against Iran on the tenth anniversary of the agreement – which will be soon, on October 18, 2025 – if Iran is found in violation of its nuclear commitments by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). This is the snapback mechanism.

Well, the IAEA formally determined this past June that Iran is indeed in flagrant "non-compliance" with its nuclear obligations. And then shortly thereafter Iran showed off its illegal ballistic missile capabilities by firing more than 600 of them at Israel.

Invoking snapback requires a majority of P5+1 members, but not a UN Security Council resolution. (The snapback was specifically designed this way to *avoid* the UN Security Council, where Russia and China could be expected to veto any decision against Iran.)

Now here is the math: Since Russia and China are in cahoots with Iran, and since President Trump withdrew the US from the P5+1 and the rotten JCPOA in 2018, that leaves the decision to trigger snapback to the E-3.

So the E-3 had to do something, because snapback requires 30 days' advance notice, which brings the deadline forward to September 18, and the E-3 said it would pronounce on snapback by the end of August, which is this weekend.

At the same time, even after starting the snapback process, the wishy-washy Europeans are offering Iran a way out; suggesting that they won't actually *apply* snapback if Iran returns within 30 days to the negotiating table – in direct talks with the US too, and if Iran accounts for the country's large stock of enriched uranium and fully re-opens its nuclear facilities to IAEA inspections.

OF COURSE, Iran is up to its old tricks: Promise, postpone, stall, threaten, smile and negotiate, and then threaten and negotiate some more. All the while, in some as-yet-undetected Iranian bunker, the uranium centrifuges may be spinning.

Iranian foreign minister Abbas Araghchi is demanding an extension to the snapback deadline, "to give diplomacy the time and space it needs," and threatening the E-3 with a "harsh" Iranian response (- terrorism?) if the Europeans play tough.

(Araghchi also this week threatened Israel with a repeat war, and Gulf countries with blockage of their oil shipping through the Straits of Hormuz - if they don't line-up with Iran against Israel.)

Russia also is trying to buy more time for Iran. It has circulated a draft Security Council resolution that would tack a six-month extension onto the Iran nuclear accord, during which time no snapback action could be taken.

And note this: Iran's "Supreme Leader" Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Sunday that the nuclear issue is "unsolvable." He defiantly declared that "Tehran would never bow" to US, European, and Zionist pressures. "They want Iran to be

obedient to America. The Iranian nation will stand with all its power against those who have such erroneous expectations," he declared.

Given such Iranian intransigence and arrogance, the E-3 must not revert to the failed diplomacy of the past. It must not fall prey to Iran's bait-and-delay scam. It is high time for the E-3 to crack the whip and trigger snapback now – without waffling and equivocating, without offering Iran yet another opportunity to wiggle off the hook.

This would mean automatic reinstatement of the pre-JCPOA sanctions: a renewed global embargo on arms sales to Iran, limits on Iranian missile production and distribution, trade restrictions, banking and financial sanctions on Iran, a freeze on Iranian assets around the world, and travel bans on Iranian leaders.

Iran is genuinely concerned about this. Given the rickety state of the Iranian economy, such sanctions could accelerate deep rifts inside Iran and destabilize the Islamic Republic; and perhaps even bring an end to the radical theocratic regime that has ruled Iran since 1979.

IN FACT, even full compliance with past UN resolutions may no longer be sufficient. Those demands were the floor. Today's reality demands much more.

After all, Iran didn't just aggressively enrich uranium to bomb-grade levels over the past ten years, but it launched hundreds of ballistic missiles at Israeli civilian and military targets. As Jacob Nagel and Mark Dubowitz of the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies have written in this newspaper, this alone justifies new redlines.

Among the necessary new redlines are *elimination* of the three pillars of Iran's nuclear weapons program: Complete destruction of all enriched uranium, centrifuges, and enrichment facilities. Full disclosure and termination of all nuclear warhead design, related research and development, and any remaining weaponization infrastructure. Termination of Iran's ballistic missile, cruise missile, and drone arsenals, including ICBMs that can strike Europe and the US.

This also means an end to Tehran's longtime arming of Hamas, Hezbollah, the Houthis, and other proxy forces; and cancellation of Iran's nuclear, missile, and arms agreements with Russia, China, and North Korea.

All this would require super-invasive American or IAEA monitoring of Iran's bank accounts, uranium mines, mills, ore processing facilities, military and missile bases, ports and airfields, along with total destruction of Iran's underground bunkers for nuclear activities and weapons storage.

In short, another naïve diplomatic deal based on delayed snapback and flimsyphony inspections, without real-time dismantlement of Iran's core nuclear and terrorist infrastructure, would repeat Obama's fatal errors.

Hello E-3, wake up! A dawdling deal is worse than no deal. Half-measures benefit Iran, providing camouflage for nuclear rebuilding. Weakness will whet Iran's jihadist appetite for rage and revenge.

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### Six reasons to build in E-1

written by David M. Weinberg | 29.08.2025

Building 10,000 homes in E-1 is critical for the future of Jerusalem and for Israel's security. It also is appropriate pushback against the arrogant Western attempt to ram runaway, perilous Palestinian statehood down Israel's throat.

# **Grieving for Gaza**

written by David M. Weinberg | 29.08.2025

As we grieve for Israeli victims of Hamas's October 7 raid into Israel, and for Israeli soldiers killed in fighting Hamas, and for Palestinians caught in the crossfire and starved by Hamas, and for the devastation in Israel and Gaza – let's not forget a key cause of the ongoing disaster: Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's 2005 "disengagement" from Gaza and the attendant expulsion of "Gush Katif" settlers

from Gaza. What a whopping strategic mistake!

The wrong and wrenching Israeli disengagement – twenty years ago this week – inspired the October 7 massacre. It not only gave Hamas the opportunity to seize control of Gaza and dig attack tunnels and arm itself to the hilt, but it gave Hamas the motivation and confidence that it could crush Israel.

The fact that the supposed Israeli strongman, General Sharon, fled lock-stock-and-barrel from Gaza in the face of Palestinian terrorism and brutally crushed the Israeli "settler" sector, strengthened extremists in Palestinian society and led to collapse of Israeli deterrence.

Sharon's argument – that after leaving Gaza Israel would enjoy overwhelming backing from the world to decisively crush "residual" Palestinian terrorism from Gaza – turned out to be utter nonsense. Until recently, the world never truly supported Israeli military action against the jihadist Palestinian state that emerged in Gaza. And even today many world leaders refuse to recognize the obvious existential threats that any Palestinian state in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza would pose to Israel for the foreseeable future

The bottom line is that those who understood in real time that the Israeli disengagement was bound to be a disaster for Israelis and Palestinians alike – were right. The resilient Right knew that the ravaging of Gush Katif was a deathblow to Zionism and to Israeli security. The levelheaded Left knew that unilateral withdrawal would boost the worst elements in Palestinian society.

If all this was so painfully obvious, why did Sharon obtain real-time support from so many Israelis? The answer I think is that the disengagement initiative was a trenchant exhibition of bleak and vengeful impulses in Israeli politics. It was not really or mainly about peace with the Palestinians (which Sharon certainly did not believe in), but, alas, about the crushing of Religious Zionism.

Reflect upon this story from miserable August 2005. This happened several days after the violent ejection of Israelis from the magnificent towns of Gush Katif and the ransacking by Palestinians of the spectacular farms and greenhouses that Israel purposefully left behind for Palestinian benefit. I hosted in Israel a group of 14 Canadian newspaper editors. The group met its peers at all Israeli newspapers, including the then-editor-in-chief of *Haaretz*, David Landau.

Mr. Landau was an English gentleman, and to me, always a good colleague. While we were poles apart ideologically, I appreciated his advice and even his support. I knew that my Canadian guests would find him fascinating. But this time, Landau's radical creed got the better of him, and he proceeded to give a lesson in raw Israeli politics to the unsuspecting Canadians.

"You undoubtedly want to know what I think about the disengagement from Gaza," he told the Canucks. "I'll tell you: I think that it was the most important and uplifting thing that has happened in this country in decades! It gives me great hope for the future. I am delighted by the disengagement. But *not* for the reasons you imagine," Landau asserted with a smirk on his face.

"You Canadians probably think that the withdrawal is a fine thing because it ends the Israeli occupation of Gaza," Landau said, toying with the visitors. "But that's not it," he proclaimed, gesticulating with his hand in a dismissive motion. "That's not what makes the disengagement important."

"And you Canadians probably think that the withdrawal is a good thing because the Palestinians now will be able to build a thriving state in Gaza, and show Israel and the world that they can live in peace alongside Israel. But that's not it," Landau again proclaimed, again waving his hand dismissively. "That's not what makes the disengagement important."

"And you probably think that I think the withdrawal is a very good thing because my sons will no longer have to do army duty patrolling the alleyways of Khan Yunis and Jabalya," said Landau. But that's not it," he proclaimed, his hands flicking furiously and derisively. "That's not what makes the disengagement important. In fact, that's really not important at all."

Here Landau turned red in the face. He began banging on the table and bellowing at full volume. "I'll let you in on a secret: a dirty little secret known only to true Israeli insiders!" he said.

Now screaming: "The reason why the disengagement is so important; the reason why it is so historic a move; the reason why it makes Ariel Sharon into such a great hero; the reason why it fills me with hope for the future – is because we *crushed* Religious Zionism!" Landau barked.

Shocked silence in the room. And then boom, crash, whack - Landau pounded on

the table some more. "We *crushed* the Religious Zionist rabbis and settlers! We *destroyed* their Gush Katif towns, and we *smashed* their political power! We *decimated* the Religious Zionist lock-hold on Israeli politics. And now, now, now... Now there may be, finally, true hope for peace!"

Landau then wiped away the saliva that was literally oozing from his mouth. He had completed this bloody baring of his soul.

The Canadian visitors sat dumbfounded. They had come seeking understanding of Israel's strategic environment and of Israel's diplomatic horizons. Instead, they were treated to an acerbic exhibition of the vindictive compulsions that course through Israeli politics.

EVER SINCE THEN, it has been clear to me that a very deep and central motivation of the Left's enthusiasm for the Gaza disengagement indeed was evisceration of the settlement movement and the disembowelment of the Religious Zionist community that largely stands behind it.

This ugly truism was borne out at conferences in 2015 marking the tenth anniversary of the disengagement, held at the Israel Democracy Institute and the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies.

None of Sharon's aides who spoke at these conferences – Dov Weissglass, Yisrael Maimon, Amos Yaron and others – could cobble together a convincing diplomatic rationale for the expulsion; any logic that stood the test of time. Nor did they express any remorse, despite the obviously catastrophic security consequences of the unilateral withdrawal.

Intellectual figures like A.B. Yehoshua and Fania Oz-Sulzberger were no better. No regrets, no political repentance, no recalibration of their ragged strategic worldview.

"The settlers are just a bunch of fanatic right-wing crybabies," the foul-mouth Israeli media personality Yaron London roared. "So they had to move a few kilometers away, so what? I moved 16 times in my lifetime and never demanded compensation from anyone!"

Then London let the cruel cat out of the bag. "We had to get out from under your strangling grip," he told former National Religious Party MK and Gush Katif

resident Zvi Hendel, with whom he shared a stage. "The domination of Israeli politics and policy by messianic settler forces was much too overwhelming. So we clobbered you, and I am not sorry."

David Landau could not have said it better. His successor at *Haaretz*, current editor-in-chief Aluf Benn, this week wrote similarly with disdain about the "massive compensation and valuable real estate" that Gush Katif "evacuees" supposedly received. (Not true.) He would like to see a repeat of the disengagement in the West Bank. Ugh.

The morals of the story are clear: Be very skeptical of fallacies about free Palestinians living in peace alongside Israel (unless Israel maintains full control of the entire security envelope) and beware the ruthless resentments in Israel politics. Israel must rebuff international pressures to rush into risky diplomatic gambits, and Israelis must refrain from ruinous internal reprisals.

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# Hypocrisy 'uber alles'

written by David M. Weinberg | 29.08.2025 Callousness and double standards are the reasons why Israelis increasingly dismiss Western pressures.

# Israel's Superpower Mindset

written by David M. Weinberg | 29.08.2025 Get used to a revamped strategic situation anchored by a very strong Israel.

# Summer reading list: Thoughtprovoking essays on Jews, the Israel-Hamas War, and Iran

written by David M. Weinberg | 29.08.2025

Here is a summer reading roundup of 17 recent deep-think articles on a range of issues: the Gaza and Iran wars, US-Israel relations, global antisemitism, Israeli society, and more.

# The victories of Operation Rising Lion prove God protects his chosen people

written by David M. Weinberg | 29.08.2025

Warplanes of the State of Israel flew close to 400 sorties over Iran with 600 aerial refueling connections during Operation Rising Lion. Not a single jet faltered or fumbled along the way, none had technical difficulties, not a single jet was hit by enemy fire, and not a single pilot was injured or fell into enemy hands.

Is that enormously impressive or outright miraculous?

IAF attack and surveillance drones flew an additional 1,100 sorties into Iran, and only eight drones were lost in the campaign. Together, the jets and drones successfully struck over 900 targets in Iran with 4,300 munitions, including nine nuclear sites, six airports and airbases (including Mashad Airport in eastern Iran which is 2,400 kilometers away from Israel), and 35 missile and air defense production facilities.

All the strikes were executed flawlessly, and not a single Iranian defensive system or guard force managed to interdict these operations.

IDF commandos and Mossad agents operated inside Iran or from bases just across Iran's borders, launching UAVs and secret weapon systems to neutralize Iranian abilities and target Iranian military and intelligence leaders. Not a single Iranian defensive system or guard force discovered these Israeli boots-on-the-ground in real time nor managed to interfere with these operations. All undercover Israeli soldiers and agents returned home to Israel safely.

In classic military assessment, such flawless performance and perfect results are statistically impossible. Unheard of. Unprecedented. Hard to believe.

So again, I ask, is this (merely) wildly impressive or wholly miraculous?

Over 14 days, Israel was able to neatly demolish 80 Iranian surface-to-air missile systems, 70 radars, 15 Iranian warplanes, 200 of Iran's estimated 400 missile launchers, and 800 to 1,000 of Iran's estimated 2,000 ballistic missiles. In both quantity and speed of execution, this exceeded IDF planning and expectations, and again, not a single Iranian defensive system managed to interdict these operations.

Israel also assassinated 30 senior Iranian military and IRGC officers, hundreds of Basij personnel, and 11 top scientists who were key knowledge-holders in Iran's nuclear enrichment and weaponization colossus.

All this, of course, demonstrates deep intelligence penetration and matchless Israeli military planning, enormous professionalism, and supreme heroism. But given the improbabilities of it all, given the absoluteness of the accomplishment, given the power of the punch – might it also necessarily point to support from a Supreme Hand in the heavens?

NOW CONSIDER Iran's attacks on Israel. On June 12, the night before the war, at the cabinet meeting convened to approve Operation Rising Lion, the IDF estimated that between 400 to 800 Israeli civilians could be killed in Iranian missile assaults. According to some reports, Israeli leaders were warned that if the war extended beyond two weeks and Iran was able to fire all its 2,000+ missiles into Israel including the two-ton versions, the death toll could rise to 4,000 Israelis.

In the end, Iran managed to fire about 600 missiles at Israel in 18 barrages, but 87% were intercepted by Israeli and other defensive systems. Another 1,200 Iranian drones were launched into Israel, but 99% were downed by defensive systems.

In cold military terms, such high interception rates of enemy missiles and drones are almost statistically impossible. Certainly unparalleled. Successful beyond belief.

So, is this just fantastically impressive or also spectacularly miraculous?

Unfortunately, 50 missiles and one drone broke through Israeli defensives, killing 29 Israelis, wounding 3,500 more, destroying 2,300 homes in 240 buildings, and leaving 16,000 Israeli civilians homeless. All Israelis suffered through more than

600 enemy attack alerts (more than 12,000 alarms across the county in all), sleep deprivation, economic and social dislocation, and plenty of trauma. Enemy missile fire struck a central military base, a key Israeli oil refinery, and one of the country's top scientific research institutions.

But given how bad it could have been, how much worse it was expected to be, how devastating an enemy nuclear strike on Israel might have been, God forbid – it is hard to shake the feeling that the heavens were in on the protection plan for Israel, too.

In short, the statistics are totally triumphant, miraculously so. They are not logical unless you calculate something lofty and exalted beyond the mundane math.

THE MASTERFUL Israeli assault on Iran has restored Israel's deterrent power and blessedly improved its strategic situation, especially after the failures of October 7, 2023. More importantly, Israel's victories in Operation Rising Lion will perhaps point to something grander than the natural order, driving the way to spiritual conclusions.

By this I mean that maybe the miracles bestowed upon Israel in the recent war will assist people to perceive Providence at work. Perhaps the supernatural victories will lead citizens of the world to ponder the Jewish People and the State of Israel as repositories of eternal truths and as generators of moral purpose.

After all, if you permit that Israel's victories are not just impressive, but Divine, everything changes. As one ditty going around the internet this week (hazily attributed to Allister Heath of the Daily Telegraph) declares: "Once you admit that Israel's survival is Divine, your moral compass has to reset. Your (secular) assumptions about history, power, and justice collapse. If the ancient, hated nation of Israel is somehow still chosen, protected, and thriving – then maybe God isn't a myth after all."

Again, given the threats arrayed against Israel, and given Israel's wonderous recent victories, can one deny the stark, palpable intervention of God, alongside Israel's own prowess?

Can the genocidal gutter-chant "from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free" hold out against the defiant demonstration of Providential Power on behalf of the State of Israel? I do not think it can.

THE LATE Lord Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Sacks taught that the chronicles of humanity are nothing less than a drama of redemption, in which the fate of nations reflects their loyalty (or otherwise) to covenant with God.For Jews in particular, he argued, this imposes tremendous responsibility to do things right because they are reputationally associated with the Creator; they are mandated to create "Kiddush Hashem" – a sanctification of God's name in the world.

Non-Jews have also understood Jewish history this way. Sacks quotes the Russian Marxist thinker Nikolai Berdayev (The Meaning of History, 1936), who late in life came to the conclusion that the script of Jewish history bears the mark of God's

hand.

"The survival [of Jews] is a mysterious and wonderful phenomenon demonstrating that the life of this people is governed by a special predetermination, transcending the processes of adaptation expounded by the materialistic interpretation of history," Berdayev wrote. "The survival of the Jews, their resistance to destruction, their endurance under absolutely peculiar conditions, and the fateful role played by them in history: all these point to the particular and mysterious foundations of their destiny."

I think that Rising Lion indeed is a "peculiar and fateful" moment in history, a moment for spiritual introspection, not just strategic recalculation.

The victories of Rising Lion, categorically impressive and exceptionally miraculous, ought to point beyond themselves to something grander than the natural order – to the attentive hand of God in our world. Published in The Jerusalem Post, July 6, 2025.

### Veni, vidi, vici

written by David M. Weinberg | 29.08.2025

Veni, vidi, vici – I came, I saw, I conquered. This famous military pronouncement can certainly be applied to Israel's Operation Rising Lion. But how can it be that the Israeli military and political leadership that so craftily planned the offensive that struck at Iran and Hezbollah could have collapsed so stunningly before the much smaller and weaker Hamas army in Gaza?

# Waking up the Western world

written by David M. Weinberg | 29.08.2025

In countering Iran, Israel is this generation's great generator of moral purpose and strategic clarity.

# Truly 'monstrous' sanctions on Israel

written by David M. Weinberg  $\mid$  29.08.2025 Stop throwing pernicious pieties about concocted "settler violence" in Israel's face as it fights for its life.