



## Iran optimistic after talks, but Israel on guard

Tehran puts positive spin on Geneva summit as Jerusalem readies for possible attack

Amos Harel

There's considerable dissonance between the statements being made in Geneva, especially by the Iranian delegation, and the Israeli mood. After the second round of talks between America and Iran on a new nuclear deal ended on Tuesday, the Iranians made an effort to describe the talks optimistically.

In contrast, senior Israeli defense and government officials – who, unusually, have said little publicly about the Iranian crisis and the talks – have been stepping up their preparations for the worst-case scenario, in which America and Iran get into a war that might well involve Israel.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, his country's senior representative at the talks, described the meeting with the Americans at the Omani Embassy and his earlier meeting with Rafael Grossi, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, as "very serious." The atmosphere was "more constructive" than previously, he added.

According to Araghchi, the sides managed to agree on guiding principles that might make it possible to

reach an agreement. That won't necessarily happen quickly, he added, but "the path for a deal has started."

It remains to be seen how America will respond to those statements. But what's clear is that Tehran is trying to create the impression that the talks will keep going, so there is no reason for a military conflict between Iran and America. That fits with the Iranian government's strategic interest – dragging the talks out as long as possible, and thereby postponing the threat of an attack and eventually removing it entirely.

### Becoming a halakhic state

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The government can use the time it buys to continue its violent, effective repression of the protests against the regime. And if a new nuclear deal is reached, it could lead to the removal of some of the international sanctions on Iran, which would lead to some degree of economic recovery. The serious economic crisis was the main driver of the widespread demonstrations and unrest that erupted

throughout the country in late December.

Nevertheless, Israel remains very skeptical about the chances that an American-Iranian agreement will be achieved. The Netanyahu government doesn't want such an agreement, believing that it would help the Iranian regime survive at the very moment when a unique opportunity to topple it has emerged after 47 years.

Given the possibility that the talks will fail and U.S. President Donald Trump will ultimately decide to attack, the Israel Defense Forces has been accelerating its preparations to defend against an Iranian revenge attack, and if necessary, also to join the Iranian attack.

All this is happening as the Americans continue to beef up their forces in the region. The aircraft carrier Gerald R. Ford is supposed to arrive toward the end of this month, thereby completing the deployment of two relatively large naval task forces with hundreds of fighter jets. And that is on top of America's strategic bombers, which can attack Iran even from bases far away.

The other countries in the

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Muslim families getting ready to celebrate Ramadan, in Jaffa, on Tuesday.

Itai Ron

## Likud-linked jurists vie for election panel job

Chen Maanit

Lawyers with links to the Likud party are vying for the job of legal adviser to the Central Elections Commission, even though the Knesset Elections Law and rules for job candidates bar people with personal or business links to any political party.

Haaretz has learned that the first candidate, Guy Busi, has already passed through two phases of the screening process. An attorney specializing in administrative and constitutional law, Busi represented in 2022 Diaspora Affairs Minister Amichai Chikli before the Knesset House Committee and High Court of Justice when he sought to bolt the Yamina Party to join Likud. Another candidate has relatives who serve as Likud activists.

Legal sources told Haaretz that the public's trust in the committee could be harmed if either candidate gets the job.

Busi has also appeared on panels on Channel 14's "The Patriots" program, where he has defended Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and criticized his treatment by the justice system. In an interview with Kol Chai Radio in January, he said the arrest of Tzachi Braverman, Netanyahu's chief of staff, was part of an effort to hurt Netanyahu and his immediate circle, and that there was insufficient evidence against him.

About Qatargate, Busi

termed it "Qatar-fake" in an interview with 103fm Radio in April, and said it was about the "deep state" trying to unseat a right-wing prime minister. He has also represented politicians from other parties.

Haaretz has also learned that the Elections Commission had initially informed Busi that he didn't meet the conditions for candidacy, not because of his Likud connections but because he didn't have sufficient experience in election law. He appealed

the decision, and this week underwent the personal and professional vetting process. Sources said that Busi has already passed two stages of the application process – a review of the threshold conditions and personality assessments.

The job of legal adviser suddenly became available last month after Dean Livne announced unexpectedly he was stepping down after 13 years and eight election

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## Board of Peace to meet as restoring Gaza still a dream

Liza Rozovsky

The Board of Peace will convene in Washington on Thursday for its first official session, during which its chair, U.S. President Donald Trump, is expected to announce which countries have so far pledged to contribute to the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip.

Haaretz has learned that the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Qatar are among the countries that have agreed to fund Gaza's reconstruction.

On Sunday, Trump announced on his Truth Social platform that \$5 billion in financial commitments for Gaza had already been secured. Compared with the

scale of needs, especially in light of the ambitious plans his son-in-law, Jared Kushner, presented for Gaza at the World Economic Forum in Davos, these commitments remain relatively modest.

Major funding has been slow to materialize, for reasons explained by Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan in response to a question from

Haaretz at this month's Munich Security Conference.

According to the Saudis, they and other countries that would follow require assurances that the Gaza war has truly ended before committing funds. At a minimum, that would entail agreement on a clear plan to disarm Hamas and for Israel to withdraw from the Strip.

These issues are expected to be addressed at the upcoming Board of Peace meeting or during its sidelines, as they are central to advancing Trump's plans, and all parties involved are fully aware of their significance.

In a speech on Sunday to a meeting of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organiza-

tions, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed the issue of disarming Hamas and described Kalashnikov rifles, which the group deems weapons of self-defense, as the type of "heavy weapons" that must be removed from the Strip along with rocket-propelled grenades.

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Players of the Al-Ahly Club in Gaza, Saturday.

Jehad Alshrafi/AP

## Israel's first-ever Olympic bobsled team knew they had no chance



Adam Edelman, left, during a practice run last week.

Aijaz Rahi/AP

Ronen Dorfman

CORTINA D'AMPEZZO, Italy – The Israeli two-man bobsled team, comprising Adam Edelman and Menachem Chen, finished its heat on Monday in last place – among 26 teams – at the Winter Olympic Games. Many people might find that the bottom line is all that interests them, but the result is entirely understandable. "We trained for three

days on the track. The bobsled isn't the 100-meter. You can't train on one track and race on another," Edelman pointed out. And he's right. Reporters covering the sport from around the world said that their national teams have been in Italy since November or December. Many drivers were given a computer simulation of the track on which to practice. Meanwhile, Edelman was busy convincing them to let

Israel participate.

"I made a debut appearance here. We've participated. That was my job. Now someone better than me needs to come to the next games. Look at Jamaica. You say you were told that they're hoping for a medal in 2030. They've been around since 1988, and have participated in every [Olympic] Games," he noted. That's how a sport advances.

"The three or four times

that we trained we cut a lot of seconds off in each heat, but we really didn't stand a chance," Edelman admitted.

Not far from there, where the fans were, Ian was sought after for photographs because of his dreadlocks, his colorful shirt and his Jamaican flag. As at every Olympics, this year too, Jamaica sent a bobsleigh team that was loudly cheered – thanks to the cult film "Cool Runnings" about the Jamaican team at the 1988 Calgary Olympics.

He quipped that jobs have to be found for all kinds of people who aren't really athletes, even a sprinter who can run 100 meters in "just" 10.1 or 10.2 seconds. It's true. Few people have been bobsledding since childhood, and most gravitate to it from another sport.

But that may be downplaying the sprinting talents of the Jamaican bobsleigh team. Bobsled pilot Shane Pittter, who ran the 100 meters from early on in life, understood he had to find other work even when he was running 100 meters in 10.96 seconds. Pittter's two-man teammate, Junior Harris, ran it in 10.32 seconds.

But what's surprising is

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## Your car's spying on you – and Israeli firms are leading the way

Omer Benjakob

Israeli companies have developed and are selling advanced cyber tools that can hack into the technology of your car, and use it to collect intelligence on you.

These tools can also assist in cross-referencing data to identify an intelligence target among tens of thousands of cars on the road. This technology can track the vehicle's movements in real time, and potentially eavesdrop on the people inside.

In recent decades, cars have become smart devices, a collection of computers on wheels with dozens of digital systems; the vehicle cannot properly function without an internet or cellular connection. Though this vastly improves the driving experience, it also severely risks privacy, and has become a national security threat.

In the intelligence industry, such information derived from vehicles is known as CARINT, car intelligence. A Haaretz investigation has found that at least three Israeli companies are currently operating in CARINT. And one has developed an "offensive" tool that can potentially tap into your car's microphones and cameras.

Three years ago, Haaretz revealed the existence of the offensive cyber intelligence company Toka, which was co-funded by former Prime Minister Ehud Barak and a former Israel Defense Forces cyber chief, Brig. Gen. (ret.) Yaron Rosen. The firm specialized in hacking into security cameras, but as documents obtained by Haaretz at the time revealed, Toka also had a product called CARINT that fused camera data with data linked to cars.

At the time, the industry was in its infancy. But industry sources say that Toka has since expanded its offering on cars. It has developed and even sold a product capable of hacking into a specific vehicle's multimedia systems, pinpointing its location and tracking its movements; that is, a specific model by a specific manufacturer. The technology can even remotely access the microphone of the vehicle's hands-free system, allowing eavesdropping on the driver, and even tap into cameras installed on the dashboard or around the car.

The Defense Ministry approved the product, allowing it to be presented to several potential clients, and authorized its eventual

sale. The company said in response to this article: "As part of our product road map for 2026, we no longer sell this product."

The Israeli cyber intelligence firm Rayzone has also begun selling a vehicle surveillance tool, albeit one that only tracks cars. The product is sold alongside an array of products for collecting and cross-referencing data harvested from various sources. Haaretz previously revealed that Rayzone had developed a groundbreaking tool enabling the tracking and identification of targets based on advertising data that is commercially available online, exposing the targets without having to hack into a device.

Rayzone's new CARINT product is sold by its new subsidiary TA9, a reference to science fiction writer Isaac Asimov. Marketing brochures obtained by Haaretz show that the new CARINT tool feeds the data it can collect from a car into a system that provides Rayzone's clients with "full intelligence coverage" of the target under surveillance. The vehicle is just one of many data points being tracked by the firm.

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