

“Israel wants to make America go to war with Iran on its behalf.” Interview with Tarik Cyril Amar

By [Tarik Cyril Amar](#) and [Steven Sahiounie](#)

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*If Israeli **Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu** wants a war with Iran, on the US taxpayers and voters expense, he had better attack quickly. On January 20, **President Donald Trump** takes office, and he was elected on an anti-war platform.*

We don't know what Trump will do after assuming office, and we don't know if Netanyahu will remain in office. His extremist ministers, **Bezalel Smotrich and Itamar Ben Gvir**, have shackled Netanyahu to a policy of genocide in Gaza, and they are advocating annexing the Occupied West Bank.

Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon are all scenes of brutal Israeli military aggression, and the US taxpayers are paying for every bullet fired and every bomb dropped.

While the outgoing Biden administration has failed to stop Netanyahu, or even to get a ceasefire, the Trump administration may see the situation differently, and put on the breaks, instead of shining the green light.

Steven Sahiounie of MidEastDiscourse interviewed [Tarik Cyril Amar](#), a historian and [geopolitical analyst](#) writing on X under @tarikcyrilamar.

Steven Sahiounie (SS): Israel has assassinated the political and military leaders of Hezbollah, but Hezbollah's military operation against Israel is increasing. How do you analyze this?

Tarik Cyril Amar (TCA): It's clear, now empirically “tested” evidence that Hezbollah's organization is deep and complex enough and its popularity great enough to resist a “decapitation” strategy. It can maintain effective operations during and after such “decapitation” strikes and it can also generate new leaders at multiple levels. Regarding Israel, its repeated reliance on such methods indicates that it has illusions about its adversaries, systematically underestimating them, in part at least, I strongly suspect, due to a colonialist-racist mental bias: the old prejudice that “the natives” are incapable of complex organization and that therefore one merely has to kill their “chiefs” to defeat them. In that sense, the whole phenomenon illustrates not only Hezbollah's strength, but also one of the weaknesses generated by Zionist-colonial ideology, that Israel cannot shed and that will stay with it to its downfall.

SS: Israel announced that they have attacked Iran, but Iran announced that the attack was not overwhelming. In your opinion, was the Israeli attack on Iran an Israeli success?

TCA: No, on the contrary. The last Israeli attack showed limits of Israel's military power and

reach and, I believe, also that Israel is actually deterred by Iranian missile capabilities even now, while Iran does not have nuclear weapons yet (at least as far as we know). What we do not know at this stage is what shape a potential further Israeli attack may take, in particular under the circumstances of the incoming Trump administration. Therefore, while we can register that the last attack was a failure, it would be very unwise to draw too many conclusions.

SS: Iran is threatening to attack Israel in response of the Israeli attack on Iran. In your opinion, will this attack happen, and if so will it take the region to a war?

TCA: Like others, I can only offer a guess. In my opinion, Iran will retaliate, but not with one massive missile strike, because that would make it all too easy for Israel to get the US on its side again for either massive support for another Israeli attack on Iran or even, in the worst case, make the US itself go to war with Iran. Israel, of course, wants precisely that: to make America fight yet another devastating war in the “Middle East” on its behalf. It is, I believe, very hard to predict if Israel will get its way in this regard. It is true that the incoming Trump administration is as Zionist, Israel-compliant, and co-genocidal as the outgoing Biden administration (at least), but Trump is also a nationalist and averse to war, not out of the goodness of his heart, but because he sees how wasteful it is. From Tehran’s perspective it is probably a priority now to minimize, as much as possible, US aggression. Much of it is inevitable, but a direct American attack is not a foregone conclusion. Against that backdrop, Tehran may well choose to tread carefully and calibrate its response in a manner that avoids that kind of escalation.

SS: The US presidential election is over. In your point of view, how will President Trump winning the election effect the situation in the Middle East?

TCA: In short: badly. But then, that’s what all US administrations do. The outgoing Democrats needed to be punished for their co-perpetrating a genocide with Israel. Unfortunately, that does not mean that Trump will not do the same. We will see a shift from Genocide Joe to Genocide Donald. Trump has also already signaled that he won’t be any better than Biden regarding anti-genocide protest and resistance in the US either. The new president as well will do his worst to repress them. The fundamental problem remains: the enormous pro-Israel bias of the American establishment.

Again, what we don’t know is how far Trump will go in obeying all of the Israeli agenda by waging direct US wars in the “Middle East.” That is a more complicated question. It is true that his current picks for high positions signal that “hawks” with, in essence, neocon agendas, are put in charge. But, as Stephen Walt has posted on X, the picks also signal that Trump wants weak figures that leave him in charge ultimately. Moreover, US foreign policy hawks have more than one target of aggression. A focus on China may play a role in restricting their most extreme options with regard to Iran and Syria.

What should not be underestimated, in any case, is the influence of players other than the US and Israel. By which I don’t mean the EU-Europeans, who have voluntarily chosen complete subordination to the US. Lebanon, at this point, is yet another victim of horrendous Israeli aggression and, like Gaza and the West Bank, has been effectively abandoned by the so-called “international community.” There, the decisive factor is the local resistance offered by Hezbollah, which Israel has not been able to subdue.

But Iran, Yemen (under de facto Ansarallah control), Iraq, Syria, even states such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia are not entirely controllable or entirely predictable. If the Trumpists believe that a simple return to the “normalization” policies of the first Trump administration is possible, they are likely to be disappointed. This is all the more so since the importance of other power centers such as Russia and China is also growing, if mostly quietly.

In short, I would expect nothing good at all from this new administration; I never have. But the new administration – notwithstanding Trump’s customary braggadocio and America’s equally customary arrogance – won’t call all the shots.

Finally, a key question remains if/when Iran acquires nuclear weapons and, crucially, the capacity to deliver them not only regionally but intercontinentally. Iran with the deterrent capabilities of North Korea would, of course, be a – if not the – “game changer.” Personally, I am optimistic in that regard.

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