

## Why Israel-Hamas ceasefire keeps failing



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Yet again, another ceasefire deal for Gaza in Doha has been rejected to pardon a sliver of misery for the Palestinians suffering through the most devastating genocide in Gaza. US President Joe Biden had touted that the latest ceasefire deal was “closer than ever” to being achieved as risks of a wider war in the region sparked fear. But if one knows Benjamin Netanyahu, and the simple fact that he faces political death if the war ends, then hopeful words regarding any ceasefire deals should always be taken with a grain of salt. It was absolutely no coincidence that Netanyahu put five new conditions on the deal and thwarted the possibility of de-escalation in the region.

Hamas has opposed a continuing presence of Israelis in Gaza, and maintained that it will not accept a deal that is not permanent. And it is well-known that Netanyahu’s extremist government does not want a permanent ceasefire. Hamas has rejected the latest deal, blaming it mainly on Netanyahu, stating that he is fully “responsible for the lives of his prisoners, who are exposed to the same danger that our [Palestinian] people are exposed to due to his continued aggression and systemic targeting of all aspects of life in the Gaza Strip.”

Netanyahu’s efforts to smash any efforts for a truce is so blatant that Israeli citizens have been regularly protesting against him, calling for his resignation and a ceasefire deal, which seem to now be synonyms. The families of hostages, as well as the opposition, members of the army and so on, have protested, and even Defence Minister Yoav Gallant bashed Netanyahu’s lack of a “post-war” Gaza plan, admitting that it is Israel who has been the disrupter of the deals so far.

For the ninth time in 10 months, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken is visiting the Middle East as talks will resume again in Cairo. All these visits have mainly been

delivered a blistering speech attacking Israel’s settlement policy and Netanyahu’s extremist government in 2016, stating, “The policies of this government—which the prime minister himself just described as ‘more committed to settlements than any in Israel’s history’—are leading... towards one state.” His remarks were met with criticism, as Netanyahu and the apartheid regime of Israel prevailed in the US establishment.

Netanyahu has handcuffed every mediator of ceasefire deals, especially the US, by imposing conditions that Hamas will not accept, and conditions that he knows Hamas will not accept. The US has failed time and again to exert any real pressure—under a weak president—to make Israel agree to a ceasefire deal; Joe Biden remarked in the *Time* magazine, as recent as in early June, that there is “every reason” to draw the conclusion that Netanyahu is prolonging the war for his own political self-preservation. Everything that has happened in the past few years has proven a fact that the US cannot deny, which is that the main weapon in Netanyahu’s hand is the laxity in US diplomacy towards Israel, which has now morphed into a culture of deference.

The war, however, in many ways, is considered an “American war” with the US’s involvement, backing and major backtracking from any solution proposed beforehand. But political calculations regarding the dynamics with Netanyahu suggest that it is now increasingly unobtainable for the US, under this administration, to end the war. One could argue that Blinken’s efforts at so called “peace” would have been more successful had he carried bags of rice and flour in his giant jet and given it to starving Palestinians in Gaza, instead of flying thousands of kilometres to talk and have expensive yet futile conversations.

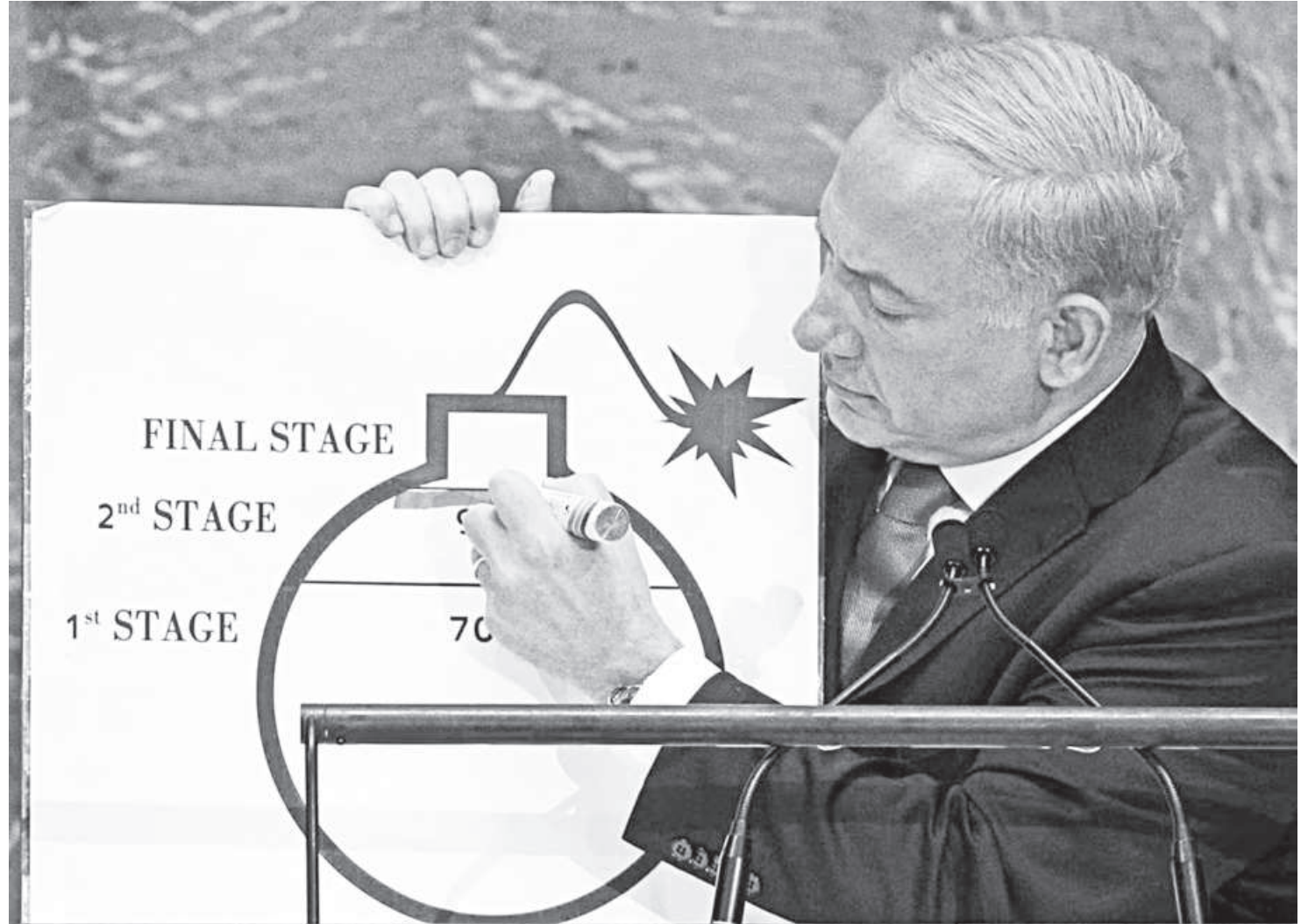
of Congress. Iran has maintained that it will retaliate, leaving the US in another precarious situation to deal with a wider eruption in the Middle East. Once again, the US is flexing muscle power with its fleet, sending stealthy fighters, dozens of F-22 Raptors, even a guided missile submarine along with a squadron of Marine Corps, not to mention bolstering US forces in its bases in the region—only to show its support for Israel. As the Democrats face

protesters calling for a ceasefire “Iran’s useful idiots,” and said, “When we fight Iran, we are fighting the most radical and murderous enemy of the United States.” Similarly, in 2012, Netanyahu took a paper showing a graphic bomb to the United Nations General Assembly, and ridiculously made drawings on it on the podium, to demonstrate the grave threats of Iran’s nuclear capabilities.

He had waged a public campaign and

under his leadership.

Netanyahu knows that a ceasefire deal would grant safety to Israeli citizens as well, but it conflicts with his aim to provoke a wider war with Iran. He has been touting messianic beliefs since October 7, 2023, because he has one aim: to use this unprecedented opportunity to rebuild the Israel that Ben-Gurion created, which can only and delusionally be done through the destruction



**Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu draws a red line on the graphic of a bomb during his address at the 67th United Nations General Assembly in New York on September 27, 2012.**

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

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to meet Israeli ministers, and all the energy spent has led to nothing tangible except the continuation of hellish extermination of Palestinians. Former US President Barack Obama’s Secretary of State John Kerry also made a record number of visits to the region, but after his realisations, he

Netanyahu and his cabinet were very clear in their aims to deliver a multi-dimensional blow, when they decided to assassinate Haniyeh, the head of Hamas’ political bureau in Tehran, right after Netanyahu’s controversial visit to Washington, where he garnered shameless applause from members

a high-stake elections against Donald Trump where their support for Israel’s genocide can play a “make or break” role for Vice-President Kamala Harris’s election bid, Biden recently approved a further \$3.5 billion of military aid to Israel, as Israel bombed a religious school, Al Tabien, and a mosque in Gaza, and parents and family members mourned hundreds of their lost ones, many of whose bodies were dismembered and collected in plastic bags—highlighting unspeakable brutality.

Anyone who has followed the biography of Benjamin Netanyahu knows that he has always held a dream of starting a war with Iran and dragging the US into it. US presidents, including Bush, Obama, Trump and now Biden, have largely never shared Netanyahu’s enthusiasm. Netanyahu has long considered Iran as Israel’s primary threat to security; even in his address in Congress, he called

failed to convince former President Obama to withdraw the US from the Iran nuclear deal, which he achieved later in 2018 with Donald Trump, convincing him to also adopt a policy of “maximum pressure” on Iran, placing it under severe sanctions.

By eschewing reaching ceasefire deals in Gaza now, Netanyahu continues to feed his disturbing obsession with Iran; Netanyahu’s “Iranian file is the file of life” is an age-old title by journalists in the region that he achieved for his scorched-earth policy towards Iran since becoming the prime minister of Israel. Even when Netanyahu faced trials and charges of corruption in 2021, he escalated half-covert attacks on Iran’s facilities and attacks on Iranian shipping in the Persian Gulf. The political timing of the security crisis of immense “Iranian threats” came not-so-subtly with the goal of making it easier for Netanyahu to form another government

of Iran and its axis. This warped logic is the only way to understand Netanyahu’s politics.

By taking ceasefire deals off the table, manipulating the US and the West, Netanyahu may just be poised to engineer his dreams professionally. Iran is aware of the depth of the impasse and that the US carriers have been sent with the aim of messaging, not with the aim of igniting a war. But Netanyahu’s actions have left Iran with very little options: to respond or not to respond. The wolf has managed to trap everyone in his sadistic quest to become a historical wartime figure. As invincible as he might think he is with a crown on his arrogant head, Iran and Hezbollah are significant powers, and no one knows the scale of Russia’s involvement if Israel were to use “unconventional” weapons. Netanyahu is venturing into dangerous territories, putting Israel, the US, and the world on the brink of catastrophe.

## Echoes of colonialism in Bangladesh



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In 1757, on the plains of Plassey, a battle reshaped the destiny of Bengal and the Indian subcontinent. The British East India Company, through a mix of military might and betrayal, wrested control from the Nawab of Bengal. This marked the start of British colonial dominance in India, with East Bengal becoming a jewel in the British crown. Exploited for its wealth and strategic importance, Bengal’s story continued into 1971 when the people of East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, fought for independence from West Pakistan. This struggle was not just about severing ties with an oppressive regime but reclaiming a suppressed identity. India, with its own colonial scars, played a crucial role in this liberation, but new dynamics began to emerge as the dust settled.

Colonialism in the region did not end with the lowering of the Union Jack in 1947. It’s important to note that colonialism, by definition, is the policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country.

The legacies of British imperialism persisted, with the British dismantling Bengal’s traditional industries and redirecting its wealth, leaving behind a fractured society marked by economic disparity, social divisions, and a controlling political system. Throughout recent history, Bengal has been colonised. Whether it is remnants of British imperialism, or the thirst for power, or the threat of regional instability—for one reason or the other—Bangladesh has been subjected to entrenched colonialism and colonialist practices.

Under West Pakistan, and even now, as Bangladesh grapples with the aftermath

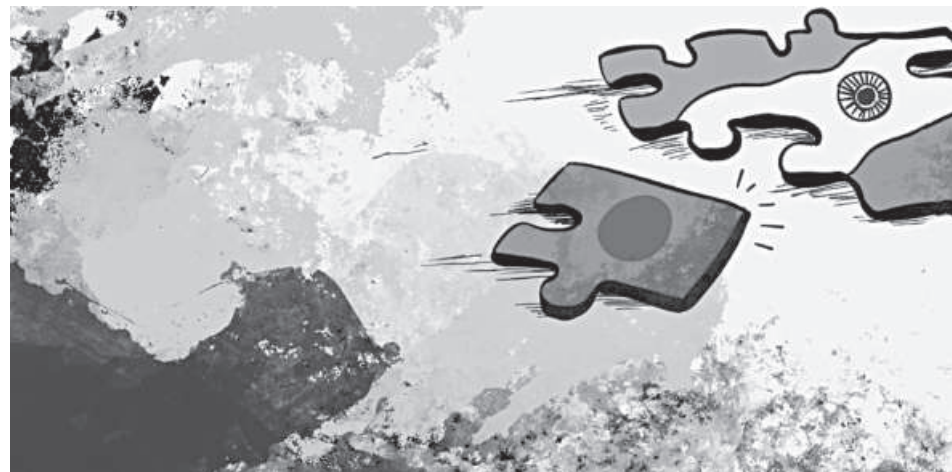
of dictatorship and threats of Western and regional imperialism, Bangladesh’s sovereignty is repeatedly questioned and disrespected. Today, as Bangladesh navigates a new political landscape following Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s resignation and the appointment of Nobel Laureate Dr Muhammad Yunus as interim head of government, the echoes of colonialism still linger as we experience some semblance of hope.

Over the last 15 years, Sheikh Hasina’s government has apparently allied herself with regional powers, aligning herself with the so-called “Emerging World Order.” With deepening ties with China, through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a delicate dilemma with competing interests from China and India in the Teesta project, and with Russia as the primary investor in the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant—Sheikh Hasina seemingly positioned herself as almost an antidote to imperialism.

Meanwhile, with claims of backing Sheikh Hasina to stay in power, India’s controversial position has been repeatedly highlighted during the “India Out” campaign that launched after the January elections in Bangladesh and is even echoed now.

Since Sheikh Hasina was ousted in a mass democratic uprising against her government’s brutal handling of student protests, she has been sheltering in India. A recent report by *The Washington Post*, revealed that Indian officials had in fact lobbied to their US counterparts to stop putting pressure on Hasina for jailing thousands of rivals and activists before the election in January. Ultimately, the US substantially softened

its criticism and “shelved further threats of sanctions,” according to the article. However, US officials claimed the decision was calculated, not only borne out of mere lobbying by India, though some did consider the “downside of antagonising India,” as the relationship between the two nations deepened in their shared position against China. However, the fact that Bangladesh was a topic of lobbying between the US and India



FILE VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

also highlights the downsides of the “balance of power” that Sheikh Hasina sought, which did not serve the people of Bangladesh in the geopolitical sphere.

Western actions in light of recent developments—visas revoked for the former head of government, cautious diplomacy and the EU’s postponement of its Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with Bangladesh—highlighted the continued influence of the West in Bangladesh, reminiscent of colonial powers, which has raised suspicion among some sections of the public.

But truthfully, much of the sanctions—both Rab and the visa sanctions—and denial of asylum to the ousted prime minister may have been responses to human rights violations. Thousands of diaspora members across the globe have campaigned for justice and showed solidarity with the hundreds

of lives that have been lost in the weeks preceding Sheikh Hasina’s resignation. With movements such as those for Palestine, conversations around justice are changing. There is greater awareness now, and the gradual shift of power dynamics suggest the era of unchecked imperialism may be ending.

Amidst this, India’s position, with repeated propaganda in the media over rising Islamist militancy, painting Bangladesh in a broad

stroke and trying to control the narrative—by embracing the Awami League’s narrative—on Bangladesh’s second revolution has been telling. With the swearing in of the interim government, Bangladesh’s powerful neighbour and principal ally of the Awami League, India, stands to lose the most, unless there is a quick strategic shift to recognise the new Bangladesh as a people’s one. Though conversations have taken place between the chief advisor and India’s prime minister, the tense aura over the two nations’ relations has not lifted, and whether India will truly commit itself to the people of Bangladesh remains to be seen.

In navigating colonialism, we have to ask ourselves, who is striving for control. India is seen by other countries in the region as a meddling influence; five citizens from Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bangladesh issued a letter

During Sheikh Hasina’s regime, like many others, Dr Yunus also suffered judicial harassment. The US showed significant support for Dr Yunus. In an open letter dated August 27, leaders, including former US President Barack Obama, former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and more than 100 Nobel laureates, said they were deeply concerned by threats to democracy and human rights in Bangladesh specifically citing the case of Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus.

As a globally respected personality, Dr Yunus is welcomed by many—including the youth—who are seeking change. Yunus’s leadership will be crucial in determining whether Bangladesh can navigate this world order, where realpolitik and imperialism persist, and preserve its sovereignty. But as the nation struggles with collective post-traumatic stress, the question that comes to mind is: can Dr Yunus remain steadfast in the face of international pressure and navigate Western imperialism with the same grace as he is doing with our most influential neighbour?

The political landscape in South Asia is fast evolving. Though in turmoil, Bangladesh—due to its size, location and economy—is well positioned to be a key player in this new world order. And how India adapts to the new change, will determine whether it can unlearn its colonial legacies to embrace a future of mutual respect and cooperation. The challenge for Bangladesh’s leaders will be to assert sovereignty and resist external control, whether from former allies or new global powers. For now, Bangladesh stands as a reminder that echoes of colonialism, though faint, still resonate in New Delhi.