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## A government without God

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On July 12, 2006, the Olmert government decided to go to war without understanding it was deciding to go to war.

The decision that would cost 160 Israeli lives and deprive Israel of its deterrent ability was made without a proper discussion, without examining alternatives and without an understanding of the political significance and strategic ramifications.

Shockingly, Olmert's ministers approved a proposal without knowing what it was at all. In doing so, they made the supreme leadership blunder. There was an act of leadership negligence.

In the 10 months that have passed, Olmert, his court, and his courtiers have done everything they could to blur the severity of their failure. They have wrapped the reality of our lives in a thick fog of lies, half-truths and spins. The Winograd Committee lifted the fog yesterday. In businesslike and exact language, it presented the Israeli public with the bare truth. The emperor is naked, the committee stated. There is no captain at the helm.

If Ehud Olmert had integrity, he would have resigned last night. He would have packed his belongings, vacated the house on Balfour Street and returned to November 29th Street until renovation of the house on Cremieux Street is complete. But the prime minister doesn't have integrity. He lacks the ability to bow his head before a democratic institution or a moral court. Even if the institution is an institution he appointed himself and the court is a court he invented.

For many years, Israelis sought a government without the religious. In Olmert's government, they got a government without God. It is now clear that a government without God is also a government without talent. Without a moral compass, without a political agenda and without a grip on reality.

Starting this morning, the floor returns to the public. As long as the Winograd Committee sat behind closed doors, Israel's citizens dozed. They allowed the committee to do its work while they went on with their daily lives. If that remains true in the coming days, Israel will continue to be run recklessly. Sooner or later it will run aground. However, if the Winograd report leads to a belated awakening from the national coma, it will be remembered as one of the most important official documents ever written. The document that saved Israel from a leadership that breached its duty.