



# Biden Heading To AIPAC With Lower Expectations

*Obama's Recent Slights Against Israel Complicate An Already Strained Relationship*

**Today, Vice President Biden Will Address The AIPAC Policy Conference.** "Vice President Joe Biden will make a speech to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the powerful lobbying group that advocates close relations between the U.S. and Israel, at its conference in Washington, D.C. next month. Biden will address the group on March 4, an aide told Yahoo News, confirming a report in JTA." (Olivier Knox, "Biden To Address AIPAC Conference," [Yahoo! News' The Ticket](#), 2/26/13)

## THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION'S RECENT MOVES HAVE NOT DONE MUCH TO REPAIR THE DAMAGED U.S.-ISRAELI RELATIONSHIP

**Obama And Netanyahu's Relationship Is An "Odd And Unwelcome Rivalry Among Allies."**

"Diplomacy is, ultimately, about relationships. Obama and Netanyahu don't really have one. And that's created an odd and unwelcome rivalry among allies — a testy liberal-vs.-conservative chess match that mirrors Obama's contest with Mitt Romney, who has known Netanyahu for years. 'There is a lack of rapport between these two men — they don't like each other very much. Plus there are serious differences between our interests and Israel's own security interests,' said former State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley, who was present for several of Obama's nine face-to-face meetings with Netanyahu." (Glenn Thrush, "Benjamin Netanyahu Vs. Barack Obama," [Politico](#), 9/13/12)

- **Obama's Relationship With Netanyahu Has Been "Complicated By Misunderstandings, Diplomatic Miscues And Occasional Differences Of Opinion."** "President Obama's relationship with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been complicated by misunderstandings, diplomatic miscues and occasional differences of opinion." (Aamer Madhani, "Iran Further Complicates Relations Between Obama, Netanyahu," [USA Today](#), 3/2/12)

*Obama's New Defense Secretary Regarded As "Bottom Of The Class" On Israel*

**AIPAC Former Executive Director Morris Amitay: "I Would Regard Him As The Bottom Of The Class As Far As Israel Goes."** "Anything short of automatic support for Israel by America's defense secretary could be disastrous for the Jewish state, according to several Jewish political and pro-Israel observers. 'I would regard him as the bottom of the class as far as Israel goes,' said Morris Amitay, a

former executive director of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee and treasurer of the Washington PAC, a pro-Israel political action committee.” (Adam Kredo, “Bottom Of Class,” *Washington Jewish Week*, 9/2/10)

- **Amitay: “Hagel Would Be In A Position To Reinforce The Worst Aspects Of The Administration’s Current Middle East Policies, Which Would Be Very Dangerous For Israel.”** “‘Hagel would be in a position to reinforce the worst aspects of the administration’s current Middle East policies, which would be very dangerous for Israel,’ Amitay noted, pointing to what he said are the former senator’s ‘troublesome’ foreign policy views.” (Adam Kredo, “Bottom Of Class,” *Washington Jewish Week*, 9/2/10)

**Hagel In 2008: “The Jewish Lobby Intimidates A Lot Of People Up Here.”** HAGEL: “The political reality is that you intimidate, not you, but the Jewish lobby intimidates a lot of people up here. And again, I have always argued against some of the dumb things they do because I don’t think it’s in the interest of Israel. I just don’t think it’s smart for Israel.” (Chuck Hagel, Interview With Aaron David Miller For *Too Much Promised Land*, [Random House](#), 11/3/08)

- **Hagel: “I’m A United States Senator. I’m Not An Israeli Senator.”** HAGEL: “Let me clear something up here if there’s any doubt in your mind. I’m a United States Senator. I’m not an Israeli senator. I’m a United States Senator. I support Israel. But my first interest is, I take an oath of office to the constitution of the United States. Not to a president, not to a party, not to Israel.” (Chuck Hagel, Interview With Aaron David Miller For *Too Much Promised Land*, [Random House](#), 11/3/08)
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### ***Obama’s New Secretary Of State Will Skip Israel On His First International Trip***

**Kerry Decided Not To Visit Israel On His First Trip Overseas As Secretary Of State.** “Despite the numerous Middle East stops, Kerry will not travel to Israel or the Palestinian territories. He will wait to visit them when he accompanies President Barack Obama there in March.” (“John Kerry Heading Overseas,” [The Associated Press](#), 2/24/13)

## **OBAMA HAS BACKED AWAY FROM HIS PUSH TO REVIVE THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PEACE PROCESS**

**In 2008, Obama Said As President He Would Make Middle East Peace A Top Priority.** OBAMA: “As president, I will work to help Israel achieve the goal of two states, a Jewish state of Israel and a Palestinian state, living side by side in peace and security. And I won’t wait until the waning days of my presidency. I will take an active role, and make a personal commitment to do all I can to advance the cause of peace from the start of my administration.” (Senator Barack Obama, [Remarks At The AIPAC Policy Conference](#), Washington, D.C. 6/4/08)

**Obama Has “Little To Show” For His Promise To Make The Peace Process A Priority In His First Term.** “Obama, who has a testy relationship with right-wing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, made peace between Israelis and Palestinians a priority in his first term but, four years later, has little to show for it.” (Arshad Mohammed, “Obama Plans To ‘Listen,’ Not Present Mideast Peace Plan: Kerry,” [Reuters](#), 2/26/13)

**Secretary Of State John Kerry Has “Played Down Expectations” Even Further By Saying Obama Will Not Bring A Peace Plan To Israel When He Visits Later This Month.** “President Barack Obama will not bring a peace plan to Israel and the Palestinian Territories next month, but rather intends to listen, Secretary of State John Kerry said on Tuesday. Obama’s plan to visit has raised speculation of a new U.S. push to revive Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, stalled since 2010 in a dispute over Israeli settlement

expansion in the occupied West Bank. But Kerry, speaking to German students during his first foreign trip as Washington's top diplomat, played down expectations. 'We're not going to go and sort of plunk a plan down and tell everybody what they have to do,' Kerry said. "I want to consult and the president wants to listen.'" (Arshad Mohammed, "Obama Plans To 'Listen,' Not Present Mideast Peace Plan: Kerry," [Reuters](#), 2/26/13)

- **The Trip Appears To Be Focused On Signaling A Reset Of Obama And Netanyahu's Strained Relationship.** "By making Israel a stop on the first overseas trip of his second term, Mr. Obama hopes to demonstrate support for the Jewish state despite doubts among some of its backers. But the trip also seems designed to signal a new start in a fraught relationship rather than an ambitious effort to revive a stalled peace process." (Peter Baker, "Obama Plans Visit to Israel This Spring," [The New York Times](#), 2/5/13)