

Obama Administration Stands with Israel

Conservatives, Republicans, and others have repeatedly and falsely alleged that the administration of President Barack Obama has not staunchly defended Israel's security interests while pursuing peace negotiations between Israel, the Palestinians, and the larger Arab world. Yet the comments exchanged during this weekend's press conference in Jerusalem – between Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu – prove this to be a myth.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in remarks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on October 31, 2009:

What the prime minister has offered in specifics of a restraint on the policy of settlements, which he has just described – no new starts, for example – is unprecedented in the context of the prior two negotiations. ... [T]here's never been such an offer from any Israeli government. And we hope that we'll be able to move in to the negotiations where all the issues that President Obama mentioned in his speech at the United Nations will be on the table for the parties to begin to resolve.

(<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2009a/10/131145.htm>)

Netanyahu's remarks to Clinton on October 31, 2009:

I think that we owe a vote of thanks to you, to George Mitchell, to your staffs, and of course, to President Obama and the entire Obama Administration for the tireless efforts to re-launch the peace process – the peace process between us and the Palestinians, and between us and the Arab world – following the President's vision of a regional peace. We are eager to advance both.

... On Iran, I want to express our appreciation for the very clear stance adopted by President Obama that has united, as Secretary Clinton has just said, an international consensus that Iran must cease its efforts to become a nuclear military power. I think the fact that there has been unity that has not been seen for a long time on this position is something very valuable, very important. And I think it's important not only for Israel, I think it's important for the Middle East, for our region, for the peace of the world. So I want to commend the efforts of you and President Obama and the Western and other leaders have taken here to – on this issue that I think is central to the future of the world, to the future of peace.

(<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2009a/10/131145.htm>)

Palestinian leadership remains opposed to resuming peace talks:

The Washington Post, November 2, 2009:

“The U.S.-mediated peace process, overseen by special envoy George S. Mitchell, is ‘in a state of paralysis, and the result of Israel's intransigence and America's backpedaling is that there is no hope of negotiations on the horizon,’ said Nabil Abu Rudaineh, a spokesman for Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, speaking to local reporters.”

(<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/11/01/AR2009110101135.html>)

Regardless of the Palestinian comments over the weekend and negative reaction from Arab states around the world, the Obama administration remains committed to ensuring Israel's security while pursuing the peace process.

Learn more at www.njdc.org

Updated: November 3, 2009