

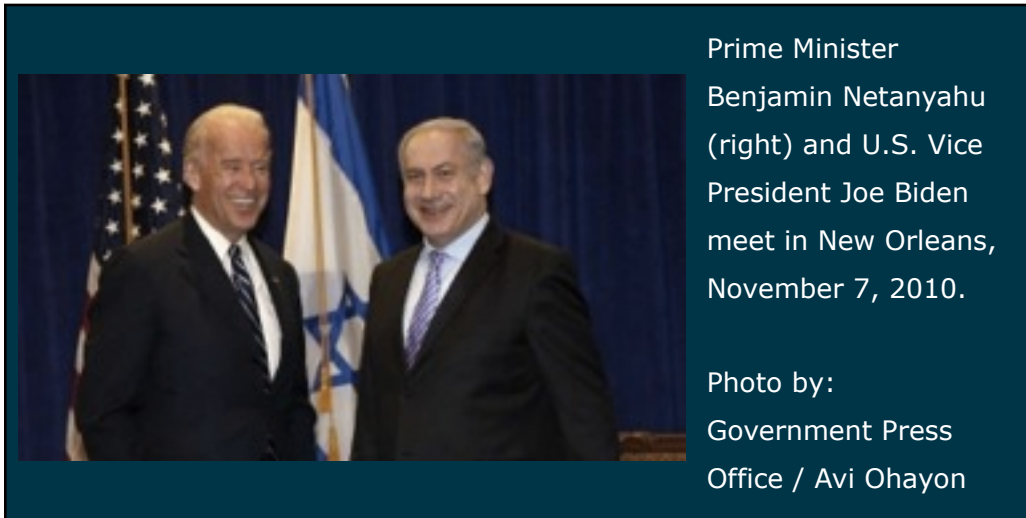
Netanyahu tells Biden: Peace agreement must not be forced on us from above

Netanyahu meets with U.S. VP Biden on sidelines of Jewish GA in New Orleans; says that Palestinians must be stopped from taking unilateral action to establish a state.

By [Natasha Mozgovaya](#)

NEW ORLEANS - Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with U.S. Vice President Joe Biden on Sunday night to discuss Iran and the peace process with the Palestinians, beyond the immediate question of the settlement construction freeze, sources said Sunday. They said the two leaders addressed what must be done so that the peace process will move forward, including security arrangements needed.

Netanyahu said there must be an agreement that is not forced on the parties from above and that the Palestinians must not attempt to circumvent negotiations by declaring statehood through the United Nations, the sources said.



Netanyahu and Biden were speaking on the sidelines of the Jewish Federations of North America's annual General Assembly convention, held in New Orleans this year.

The sources said Netanyahu spoke about the need to get Arab countries involved in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, because that will give Israel a security buffer and political backing.

Netanyahu denies that there is a rift between Israel and the United States, or between Israelis and American Jews, according to the sources.

He reportedly said that the U.S. Congress was positive toward Israel before the November 2 midterm elections and will be positive toward Israel afterward as well. He said there is also fundamental support for Israel within the United States, saying, "We may have lost Thomas Friedman, but I don't think we lost America," according to the sources.

As in the past, Netanyahu said that Israel has done enough to prove that it is serious, while the Palestinians have not taken any steps to demonstrate their seriousness about peace, the sources said.

Unfriendly welcome

Participants in the GA who listened to local radio in New Orleans on Sunday could have heard Scott Sekulow, a Messianic Christian who was born Jewish and calls himself a rabbi, who praised Netanyahu, enthused over Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman for standing up to the Europeans, and declared that the Palestinian refusal to recognize Israel as a Jewish state shows that they don't have peaceful intentions. Sekulow is raising money to plant 1,000 trees in the Golan Heights to replace trees that he said were destroyed by Katyusha rockets during the Second Lebanon War in 2006.

Amidst the conference hotels straddling Canal Street where GA sessions are being held, the 4,000 Jewish leaders and activists have also confronted a less-than-friendly welcome from a group of demonstrators holding placards accusing Jews of killing Jesus and anti-Semitic chants referring to the theft of private investor money by convicted Ponzi scheme operator Bernard Madoff. One demonstrator wore an apron made of a blood-stained Israeli flag. The GA participants didn't seem overly upset by the spectacle and mounted police were on hand to maintain order.

The results of this month's American midterm elections were the grist for hallway conversation at the GA, and there were also a number of people who asserted that Jewish life in the United States could not be reduced to the tenor of relations between the Prime Minister's Office and the White House.