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ast update - 04:48 31/05/2009

NALYSIS / Congress gives Obama green light to squeeze Israel

by [Aluf Benn](#)

ags: Israel News, Barack Obama >>

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United States President Barack Obama lays out long-term visionary goals, such as Middle East peace, but he moves with political pragmatism in advancing them. This is as true of his domestic and economic objectives as it is of his complex approach to Israel.

His statements are carefully tailored to the measure of Congress' support for Israel. Congressional representatives are committed to preserving Israel's security and dealing with Iran, but do not support strengthening the settlements. So Obama stresses his support for Israel's security, but is willing to confront Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over the settlements.

His strategy, echoed in every statement by administration officials about the Middle East, was probably formulated by White House chief of staff Rahm Emanuel. Obama reiterated it at his meeting with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas at the White House on Thursday. Obama demanded that the Palestinians stop their incitement against Israel and said he would not talk to Hamas until it recognizes Israel. Congress supports these positions strongly, but they have a price. On the eve of Obama's "reconciliation" speech to the Muslim world in Cairo, scheduled for this Thursday, he has one main demand on Israel - stop the settlements. That was his little gift to the Arab world.

The U.S. administration understands this demand and has the total suspension of construction in the settlements and the evacuation of the illegal outposts. Netanyahu is willing to evacuate the outposts but insists on building to accommodate "natural growth" on the basis of the understandings reached with former president



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George W. Bush: construction within built-up areas in settlements beyond the separation fence, expanding settlement blocs inside the barrier beyond the built-up area and unlimited construction in Jewish neighborhoods in East Jerusalem.

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Obama insists on a complete halt in construction. He is not bound by Bush-era understandings. A State Department spokesman indicated that Obama is also not bound by the "Bush letter" to Sharon of April 2004. The letter, seen as recognition of a future annexation of settlement blocs in Israel, was given in exchange for the disengagement from the Gaza Strip and northern Samaria.

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Netanyahu sent a dovish member of his cabinet, Ehud Barak, to the U.S. to explain that a total construction freeze was neither practical nor moral - in other words, the world will have to accept the settlements and their development as its accomplice. If even Barak says so, there is no chance of the Israeli political system accepting the freeze.

The Americans are insisting that Israel must deliver on its commitment in the road map to a halt in all settlement construction.

Netanyahu faces a difficult dilemma, whose outcome will also affect his coalition's fate. He does not have too many cards to play with, but realizes he must give the Americans something. In the coming weeks he will try to concoct a formula that will keep his coalition and party intact, and satisfy Obama as well.

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- 17:23 Obama dispatches envoy to Israel to discuss settlements
- 17:24 Russia FM: We'll demand Iran nuclear program stays civilian
- 11:12 Sirens sound across Israel in state's largest civilian drill
- 17:11 GM as parable, and Israel's sudden choice: Obama or Kahane
- 17:28 Gunman kills Arab, wounds Jew in Jerusalem shootings
- 16:55 Israel's Bar Refaeli poses naked for Esquire cover
- 14:09 Preparations for Egypt Obama visit in full force
- 20:58 WATCH: Daily news round-up from Israel
- 17:22 Shi'ite politician challenging Hezbollah in Lebanon
- 14:38 West Bank police chief: I love settlers, Tel Aviv does nothing for Israel
- 14:42 U.S. demands Israel halt construction in East Jerusalem market
- 12:01 High-powered U.S. lawyer Eizenstat to head Jewish policy institute
- 17:03 Entertainer Dudu Topaz admits orchestrating attacks on TV execs

Talkback

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1. "not fair" 03:58 | sam 31/05/09
2. Were you laughing when you wrote that? 04:05 | Barack Obama 31/05/09
3. Obama the hypocrite 04:17 | Sanders 31/05/09
4. Congress also gave obama ok to eliminate US civil rights 04:40 | Arie 31/05/09
5. Arf, arf 04:53 | Chrisona 31/05/09
6. Americans support 2 state solution 04:57 | LisaV 31/05/09
7. Analysis: If this is true 04:59 | Mark Lincoln 31/05/09
8. Wait until La Raza Removes his American Settlements 05:02 | UsedToPostHere 31/05/09
9. Bye bye to the "exchange of letters" Bibi... 05:05 | BBSNews 31/05/09
10. THE PARTY`S OVER... 05:21 | Ed 31/05/09
11. Democrats In The World Arena? 05:28 | crlman 31/05/09
12. Time for a retreat 05:34 | Shimon Cleopas 31/05/09
13. Yer going down, Bibi 05:43 | Johnboy 31/05/09
14. What he going to do if Israel say no 05:43 | Jason 31/05/09
15. Obama is the death knell for Israel 06:00 | Scott L. Havsy 31/05/09
16. speeding up the messiah 06:07 | Robert 31/05/09
17. Impass Suggestion 06:11 | Jasper 31/05/09
18. You write: Bibi realizes he has to give the US something. WHY? 06:31 | Jake 31/05/09
19. The nice thing about being in a parallel universe. 07:06 | Bernie 31/05/09
20. Obama,the UN,Iran+allies,etc.vs Israel 07:56 | Chaym Acharit 31/05/09
21. Israel can say "No" 08:03 | DT 31/05/09
22. Denial 08:03 | Iain 31/05/09
23. Questionable Judgement. 08:11 | Bazmann 31/05/09
24. Yes, reality is here! 08:31 | no more settlements 31/05/09
25. sam actually hamas did try and does support 2 state solution 09:30 | muslim-- 31/05/09
26. Two States Solution 09:42 | Taha Mokhtar 31/05/09
27. A hard rains gonna fall 10:20 | Bruce 31/05/09
28. How is it not possible to stop construction? 10:23 | David 31/05/09
29. some illegal settlements? 10:27 | the only 31/05/09
30. Reality 10:32 | leo 31/05/09
31. Bibi way back then declared publicly that israel doesn`t need aid 10:37 | anyone? 31/05/09



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32.	THE CHICKENS ARE COMING HOME TO ROOST	10:54 B`galil	31/05/09
33.	Squeezing (liquidating) the Settlements is the price of peace	10:58 Ivar	31/05/09
34.	4	11:01 tool	31/05/09
35.	Don` t worry, the Arabs are coming.	11:17 Gilad	31/05/09
36.	Our folly, Israel`s survival...	11:17 dom youngross	31/05/09
37.	to jake	11:20 mark	31/05/09
38.	American demands	11:25 Natallie Durson	31/05/09
39.	I bet liberal Jews are smiling now	11:31 Gregor	31/05/09
40.	our main stupidity	11:51 amihai	31/05/09
41.	Moreover, Ed #10... the "understandings" with Bush...	11:53 Esther	31/05/09
42.	These articles are inciting anger and hate	12:23 Sunday	31/05/09
43.	Isnt it amazing that those advoting for Israel resistance	12:29 Sunday	31/05/09
44.	Congress, Obama, and hillary are going to squeeze Netanyahu?	12:37 ameneyman	31/05/09
45.	Stop Settlements? Stop Israel	12:39 Shmuel	31/05/09
46.	Jake #18: because Israel`s existence depends 100% on US goodwill	12:51 Paul	31/05/09
47.	#26, GREGOR OF CANADA, your a nut	12:57 VIPER	31/05/09
48.	gregor, you are a genius	13:20 amos	31/05/09
49.	Over the Israeli settlements in the west bank, I see civil war.	13:24 Erastus CoupeDeVille	31/05/09
50.	to dom youngross #24	13:32 zeev	31/05/09
51.	why all the fuss from the posters?	13:36 richelle	31/05/09
52.	Good on Obama. Settlements need to stop.	13:37 richelle	31/05/09
53.	OBAMA IS 10 TIMES STRONGER THAN CLINTON	13:58 indrajaya	31/05/09
54.	Israel`s Security is not rooted in the settlements	14:14 Johan Odin	31/05/09
55.	In our hearts, we American support one state	14:16 Janet	31/05/09
56.	LaRaza	14:17 Janet	31/05/09
57.	Obama Demands Israel Settlement Freeze	14:51 Greg	31/05/09
58.	Supporting Israel security and objecting to the settlements	14:58 Dr Regina N.	31/05/09
59.	The squeeze	15:03 Joe	31/05/09
60.	re:mark	15:04 UsedToPostHere	31/05/09
61.	# 26 gregor	15:05 Axel	31/05/09
62.	Obama`s politics	15:16 Rabbi Ashkenazi	31/05/09
		15:16 UsedToPostHere	31/05/09

63.	re:Janet		
64.	betrayal	15:21 oz	31/05/09
65.	we believe in change	15:29 danish	31/05/09
66.	foreign aide	15:39 marty	31/05/09
67.	charm offensive	15:56 oz	31/05/09
68.	Lincoln as usual has no perspective on the truth#1	16:02 Arie	31/05/09
69.	Lincoln as usual has no perspective on the truth#2	16:06 Arie	31/05/09
70.	Lincoln as usual has no perspective on the truth#3	16:13 Arie	31/05/09
71.	Time is running out	16:16 Lucee	31/05/09
72.	Only a fraction of American aid to Israel is commonly known	16:17 Natallie Durson	31/05/09
73.	Change if here ... hooray	16:18 Lucee	31/05/09
74.	to #21, DT	16:24 juge	31/05/09
75.	Obama not bound by Quisling letters	16:27 W	31/05/09
76.	BBSnews - Bye, bye to your alleged following	16:29 *BEN JABO	31/05/09
77.	Obama is doing Israel a favour	16:32 ezzat tamimi	31/05/09
78.	Barak Hussein Obama	16:44 Chris Linthwaite	31/05/09
79.	to Gregor #26 - 2nd try	16:49 zeev	31/05/09
80.	#40 Joe - The squeeze	16:50 Gully Foyle	31/05/09
81.	Yes to new settlements ..	16:54 Gully Foyle	31/05/09
82.	#56, 57, 58 Arie giving his perspective of the truth	17:06 Chris Linthwaite	31/05/09
83.	us aid	17:13 oz	31/05/09
84.	Settlements are, after all, theft of land	17:13 Mitch	31/05/09
85.	Smiling liberals	17:13 Ed	31/05/09
86.	W: "obama not bound?" If that is true	17:23 Arie	31/05/09
87.	to Johnboy!!	17:31 Zvi	31/05/09
88.	congress	17:31 ehud	31/05/09
89.	ANALYSIS / Congress gives Obama green light to squeeze Israel	17:34 Cliff	31/05/09
90.	The policy is not right because its anti-Israel	17:53 Sunday	31/05/09
91.	fair solution	17:55 tonny	31/05/09
92.	Cliff, explain how you can steal land in California?	18:31 BBSNews	31/05/09
93.	Havsy-# 15 Israel, not Obama is responsible for Israels situatio	18:34 American in NY	31/05/09
94.	Squatters are anti-Israel : "Sunday"...	18:35 BBSNews	31/05/09

95. Obama	18:42 Jack Cipilinski	31/05/09
96. what are they thinking...	18:52 jim	31/05/09
97. BBSnews.nut Calif. was stolen from Mexico	18:54 *BEN JABO	31/05/09
98. BBSnews.nut	18:55 *BEN JABO	31/05/09
99. Rahm Emanuel, I salute You	19:10 ari	31/05/09
100. To all who suggest that Israel can say No.	19:18 n_erber	31/05/09
101. no land for peace	19:23 johnson	31/05/09
102. Chris:In some way I appreciate your candor	19:29 Arie	31/05/09
103. Ya gotta admire the Zionists	19:30 tad chase	31/05/09
104. re: n_erber	19:32 UsedToPostHere	31/05/09
105. bbsn	19:57 bar kochva	31/05/09
106. #96..keep drinking that same `Dead Sea Water` (End)	20:09 Edithann	31/05/09
107. Palestinians	20:10 Dave	31/05/09
108. To 98.	20:10 n_erber	31/05/09
109. Israel is no bargaining chip for the Islamic World	20:11 Rodney Dezarn	31/05/09
110. regime change	20:12 oz	31/05/09
111. obama and Israel	20:19 Alexander	31/05/09
112. money for peace plan not israel	20:38 marty	31/05/09
113. For #73 W - The Bush Letter	20:39 chet	31/05/09
114. Settlements	22:12 Jerry	31/05/09
115. America is not squeezing Israel; it is simply refusing to support	00:08 American in NY	01/06/09
116. pay for performance	15:44 marty	01/06/09
117. #113 Chet - The chattering chimp	17:51 *BEN JABO	01/06/09
118. #117 Ben Jabo, the clueless.	22:17 ballistic	01/06/09
119. Netanyahu boxed in	02:27 Gully Foyle	02/06/09



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