



# Bill Clinton: Netanyahu speech is opening act

Updated 1d 5h ago | Comments **18** | Recommend **1**

E-mail | Save | Print | **RSS**



UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Former president Bill Clinton said Monday that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's tough terms for a Palestinian peace deal are just the opening moves in a drama that will have a few more acts.

Clinton said it was a good thing that Netanyahu, who leads a hardline coalition, went on the record in support of "any sort of two-state solution."

**NETANYAHU:** [Calls for limited Palestinian state](#)  
**OBAMA:** [Welcomes Netanyahu announcement](#)

A week after President Obama addressed the Muslim world and strongly reiterated U.S. backing for independent Israeli and Palestinian states living side by side in peace, Netanyahu endorsed Sunday an independent Palestinian state beside Israel for the first time.

**FIND MORE STORIES IN:** [Barack Obama](#) | [Israel](#) | [Middle East](#) | [United Nations](#) | [Hillary Rodham Clinton](#) | [Bill Clinton](#) | [Hamas](#) |

Enlarge By Dan Steinberg, AP

Former president Bill Clinton speaks at the Clinton Foundation Millennium Network event in Los Angeles on April 30, 2009.

[Fatah](#) | [Benjamin Netanyahu](#) | [European Union](#)

Netanyahu had previously refused to agree to negotiate a two-state solution, reversing the position of the previous Israeli government, which backed the road map to Mideast peace unveiled by the United Nations, the United States, the European Union and Russia in 2003.

But Netanyahu attached conditions that were immediately rejected by the Palestinians — including recognition of Israel as the Jewish state, essentially means Palestinians refugees must give up their goal of returning to Israel. He insisted that a Palestinian state be demilitarized, and demanded that Jerusalem remain the capital of Israel. He also refused to freeze Israeli settlements in the West Bank, as the U.S. is demanding.

"Based on my experience with Mr. Netanyahu, he did what he thought he had to do to keep the ball rolling and not completely alienate the United States initiative," Clinton told reporters at the end of a news conference on his new role as the U.N. special advisor on Haiti.

"This is the opening play," he said. "This is his response to the Obama administration's first move."

"It's just the beginning, and it's a drama that will have a few more acts," Clinton said.

Reporters burst into laughter when Clinton said he hadn't gotten his talking points from the U.S. State Department and was speaking only for himself. His wife, Hillary Rodham Clinton, is secretary of state.

Clinton, as president, brokered Israeli-Palestinian peace talks in Maryland in 1998, at Camp David in July 2000, and in Taba, Egypt, in January 2001 — all to no avail.

He said Netanyahu's proposal on Sunday was "completely unacceptable" to the Fatah-led Palestinian government, which controls the West Bank and would not lead the rival Hamas faction, which controls the Gaza Strip, "to give up violence and try to join the coalition government."

Israeli and Palestinian politics are also "more fractured" than they were during his presidency from 1993 to 2001, Clinton said. "So we're a long way from where we need to be," he said.

On the other hand, the Saudi peace initiative proposed by King Abdullah in 2002 and relaunched in 2007 "has the support of the entire Arab world — save Syria — and other Muslim countries."

It offers pan-Arab recognition of Israel in exchange for the return of Arab lands captured by Israel in the 1967 Mideast war.

## Related Advertising Links

What's This?

**Charlotte News: "Mom Earns \$5k/Month**  
 Read How Charlotte Moms Are Making \$5000/Month...  
[News5Alert.com/Online-Fortune](#)

**"(1) Sexy Stomach Rule: Obey - Shocking"**  
 Learn How I Cut Down 37 lbs in Just 1 Month by...  
[www.RachelRayBlogger.com](#)

Mixx it

Other ways to share:

[Yahoo! Buzz](#)

[Digg](#)

[Newsvine](#)

[Reddit](#)

[Facebook](#)

What's this?

THE NEW BOOK FROM TIME CONTRIBUTOR AMANDA RIPLEY

**"Fascinating and useful."**  
 — *New York Times*

**"This book might save your life."**  
 — *Bloomberg News*

CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE

THREE RIVERS PRESS

## Daily Briefing E-mail Newsletters

Sign up to get:

- Nation's top news
- Money, Sports, Life, Travel, Tech and more



Sign Up Now

Clinton said Obama, his secretary of state, and Mideast envoy George Mitchell "are basically taking the right position in trying to work through this in the right way."

"What would have been a disaster is if Netanyahu had not endorsed the possibility of a two-state solution," Clinton said.

Copyright 2009 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Share this story:

Mixx it | Yahoo! Buzz | Digg | Newsvine | Reddit | Facebook | What's this?

Posted 1d 5h ago

Updated 1d 5h ago

E-mail | Save | Print | RSS

To report corrections and clarifications, contact Reader Editor Brent Jones. For publication consideration in the newspaper, send comments to letters@usatoday.com. Include name, phone number, city and state for verification. To view our corrections, go to corrections.usatoday.com.

Guidelines: You share in the USA TODAY community, so please keep your comments smart and civil. Don't attack other readers personally, and keep your language decent. Use the "Report Abuse" button to make a difference. Read more.

You must be logged in to leave a comment. Log in | Register



Submit |  Post this comment to Facebook?

Comments: (18) Showing: Newest first |  New: Most recommended!



JayMac (34 friends, send message) wrote: 5h 26m ago

Hamas will continue to overshadow talks and possible agreements as long as the Arab countries support them with money without conditions. It's time the Arab countries take care of their responsibilities in that region and usher in peace talks with the Israelis.

Recommend 2 | Report Abuse



Life by Bob (0 friends, send message) wrote: 12h 45m ago

I remember when Begen and Arafat almost had a deal. It was so close but Hamas said if the deal was made, that including and existance of Israel, they would kill Arafat as a traitor. I see no hope because fo Hamas. One all out war with only one victor.

Recommend 1 | Report Abuse



Life by Bob (0 friends, send message) wrote: 12h 49m ago

For the person who sees the parallels with the American Indian, you don't read history do you. We came into a land that the Indians had. Israel Jews had the land long before any Palistine people ever existed. You really need a History lesson.

Recommend 1 | Report Abuse



Life by Bob (0 friends, send message) wrote: 12h 53m ago

I see Palistine and the Arabs at fault. There only goal is the destruction of Israel. Now if the Palistine people had any real thought of peace with a two state solution they would have said. Yes we will reconize Israel, but they will have to leave the west bank, split Juresalem and pay \$3, billion for the right of return priviledges. Then they would have a bases for talk. But the Arab/Palistine stance of no reconition of Israel only offers one solution " The Total destruction of Israel". And that is not acceptable. This fight has gone on long enough. Time for one all out war one winner take all.

Recommend 1 | Report Abuse



**riddelup** (7 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 14h 43m ago  
I draw parallels with the treatment of the American Indian.

Recommend | Report Abuse



**Jerome Bernier** (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 19h 25m ago  
Israel has an unassailable legal right to establish settlements in the West Bank. Eugene Rostow, a former dean of the Yale Law School who was also under secretary of state in the Johnson years, would write years later that "Israel has an unassailable legal right to establish settlements in the West Bank." He argued that Israel's claims to the territory were "at least as good as those of Jordan." Prof. Stephen Schwebel, who would become the State Department legal adviser and subsequently the president of the International Court of Justice in The Hague, went a step further when he wrote in 1970 that "Israel has better title in the territory of what was Palestine, including the whole of Jerusalem, than do Jordan and Egypt." More at : <http://israelagainstterror.blogspot.com/2009/05/israels-forgotten-rights-in-jerusalem.html>

Recommend | Report Abuse



**Jerome Bernier** (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 19h 27m ago  
The Land of Israel is ours by Historical and Moral right. The Land of Israel rightfully belongs only to the Jewish people. The notion of two states for two peoples in the land of Israel cannot be accepted as the land of Israel rightfully belongs only to the Jewish people and to divide our country would be an historic injustice. As it is well known, the conflict between Israel and the Arabs is not a territorial one. If it were a territorial conflict, it could have been solved a long time ago, by territorial concessions, which have been offered a number of times to the Arabs, and rejected every time. As to the legitimate rights of the Jewish people (3 parts): [http://israelagainstterror.blogspot.com/2009/05/is-world-just-plain-stupid\\_07.html](http://israelagainstterror.blogspot.com/2009/05/is-world-just-plain-stupid_07.html)

Recommend | Report Abuse



**Yonah** (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 23h 37m ago  
people should seriously be very carefull and leave that land "israel"alone its not to be split up or parceld out or anything else it belongs to the creator of all things and people would be wise to leave it alone!

Recommend | Report Abuse



**DemocracyRules** (353 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 1d ago  
Muslim countries (along with Hamas) already turned down Bibi's proposal, showing once again they are not interested in the existence of a Jewish state. How many times do they have to make this assertion before our government understand that the Muslim world has no interest in making peace with Israel. In the Middle East 1/6 of one percent of the land is just too much for the Jewish state, as far as Muslim world is concern.

Recommend 2 | Report Abuse

**More comments on this story:** 1 2 [Next](#)

Sponsored Links

**Charlotte Residents: Make \$70/Hr Part-Time!**  
\$70/hr part-time jobs open. Requirements: Only a computer.  
[news5alert.com](http://news5alert.com)

**"(1) Sexy Stomach Rule: Obey - Shocking"**  
Learn How I Cut Down 37 lbs in Just 1 Month by Obeying this 1 Old Rule  
[www.RachelRayBlogger.com](http://www.RachelRayBlogger.com)

**Charlotte Residents: Make \$63/Hr Part-Time!**  
\$63/hr part-time jobs open. Requirements: Just a computer.  
[Daily-Job-News.com](http://Daily-Job-News.com)

[Get listed here](#)



**Charlotte Mom Lost 47 lbs Following 1 rule!**

I Cut Down 47 lbs of Stomach Fat In A Month By Obeying This 1 Old Rule [Explore Now...](#)



**Charlotte Residents: Make \$63/Hr Part-Time!**

\$63/hr part-time jobs open. Requirements: Just a computer. [Explore Now...](#)

**Newspaper Home Delivery - Subscribe Today**

[Home](#) • [News](#) • [Travel](#) • [Money](#) • [Sports](#) • [Life](#) • [Tech](#) • [Weather](#)

**About USATODAY.com:** [Site Map](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Jobs with Us](#) | [Terms of Service](#)  
[Privacy Policy/Your California Privacy Right](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Press Room](#) | [Media Lounge](#) | [Reprints and Permissions](#)

**News Your Way:** [Mobile News](#) | [Email News](#) | [IM Alerts](#) | [Add USATODAY.com RSS feeds](#) | [Podcasts](#) | [Widgets](#)

**Partners:** [USA WEEKEND](#) | [Sports Weekly](#) | [Education](#) | [Space.com](#)

Copyright 2009 USA TODAY, a division of Gannett Co. Inc.