

# Tensions between the U.S. & Israel reach the public eye

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04/03/2023



Biden with Netanyahu during a visit to Israel in 2016

Hailey Brown - Despite Prime Minister Netanyahu's decision to delay pushing his new judicial reforms through Parliament, President Biden continued to express concern for the plan in a statement to reporters. He also contradicted the U.S. Ambassador to Israel's claim that Netanyahu would soon visit Washington, saying it would not happen in the near future. In response, Netanyahu and other high-profile Israelis publicly reminded the U.S. and Biden of Israel's sovereignty. The conflict has left some questioning the state of U.S.-Israeli relations.

Governments do not make decisions at random. Rather, we can look to geopolitical codes for an explanation for the actions of a country and its leaders. Every decision is calculated based on the code's components, such as identifying allies, enemies, and threats, and considering internal and external perceptions. The United States has long promoted democracy and its values abroad. The proposed judicial reforms could undermine the only checks and balances on power in Israel's governmental system in a way some think would damage the state of its democracy. Thus, the reforms are causing the U.S. and protesting Israeli's to view Netanyahu with skepticism in his commitment to democracy. Especially because many speculate some of the reforms may protect the prime minister from the many charges he faces. Both Netanyahu's disagreement with Biden's remarks and the labeling of concerns as 'fake news' by members of his coalition may be an attempt to justify the reforms to their allies and the public.

The United States has been a hyperpower for decades, a status that holds high levels of ideological power. Within alliances and in the global context, the U.S. is highly influential. So, while the U.S. might not be outwardly telling Netanyahu not to move forward with the reforms, Biden's remarks against them are still powerful. The United States is an important ally to Israel, a relationship the government would likely strive to maintain. The question left for Netanyahu and his coalition to answer is how far judicial reform can push without hurting their alliance with the U.S., and the coalition's legitimacy with the people of Israel.

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