# Netanyahu's Partisan Policies Deepen Divide in U.S.-Israel Relations



**Netanyahu's Polarizing Impact on U.S.-Israel Relations**

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's approach over the past 16 years has dramatically reshaped U.S.-Israel relations, contributing to a stark partisan divide in American politics. When addressing Congress in March 2015, Netanyahu's relationship with U.S. leaders was already under strain. This tension was exemplified by his condescending tone during a 2014 meeting with President Barack Obama, shaping future interactions.

Netanyahu’s strategy has notably shifted from his predecessors' bipartisan diplomacy towards a closer alliance with the Republican Party while disregarding the Democrats. This alignment significantly accelerated a political divide on Israel in the U.S., especially notable during national conflicts such as the ongoing war in Gaza.

Critics, including U.S. Senator Chris Murphy (D-Conn.), argue that Netanyahu’s partisan policies have damaged Israel’s broad support in America. This shift is also influenced by changing political landscapes, with Israel moving to the right, and the Democratic Party leaning more towards the left, highlighting clashes over topics like the Palestinian state and Iran nuclear deal.

Netanyahu's actions have fostered apprehension among American Democrats who traditionally supported Israel. His decisions, such as addressing Congress in 2015 without Obama’s consent and showing preference for GOP leaders, have exacerbated these tensions. Republican leaders, on their more, have embraced Netanyahu’s stances, furthering this divide.

Some Israeli leaders, like former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, express concern that Netanyahu’s partisanship threatens the essential bipartisan U.S. support for Israel, potentially destabilizing future strategic relations. This concern is mirrored by former Obama administration officials who recall Netanyahu’s confrontational tactics, which strained bilateral relations.

Despite Netanyahu’s efforts to align with the GOP, his relationship with Democratic leaders like President Biden remains complex. Biden’s historical support for Israel has often led him to mitigate strained interactions stemming from Netanyahu's policies. However, the ongoing conflict in Gaza and rising civilian casualties have tested this fragile balance, highlighting enduring rifts.

Netanyahu’s legacy in U.S.-Israel relations illustrates a deepening partisan split in American politics regarding Israel, with significant implications for future diplomatic engagements.