

The U.S.-Israel Divide on Iran

by [Dennis Ross \(/experts/dennis-ross\)](#)

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With the proper legislative and diplomatic steps, the Obama administration could reassure Congress and Israel while strengthening the terms of an Iran deal to ensure better long-term deterrence.

The controversy over Republican House Speaker John Boehner's invitation to Benjamin Netanyahu to address a joint meeting of Congress has had the ironic effect of diverting attention from the very topic the Israeli prime minister wants to discuss: the problems with a potential deal on the Iranian nuclear program. Although everyone debates the propriety of the Israeli prime minister challenging President Obama's policy in such a setting, the partisan nature of the invitation and the timing of the speech -- just two weeks before an Israeli election -- the substance of the issue has been pushed aside. Why is there such a divide between the United States' and Israel's positions, and can they be bridged?

There is no disguising the gap between the president and prime minister. Obama is clearly prepared to accept a deal that would limit the Iranian nuclear program for perhaps the next 15 years and in a way that ensures the Iranians would be a year away from being able to produce weapons-grade uranium. Iran, however, would not be required to dismantle any nuclear facilities or infrastructure -- and, after the agreement expires, would be permitted to have an industrial-size nuclear program and be treated like any other party to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT). In Netanyahu's view, however, that means leaving Iran as a nuclear-threshold state...

[Read the full article on the *Washington Post* website. \(http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-us-israel-divide-on-iran/2015/02/20/38df4d18-b861-11e4-a200-c008a01a6692_story.html\)](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-us-israel-divide-on-iran/2015/02/20/38df4d18-b861-11e4-a200-c008a01a6692_story.html) ♦

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