

Israeli Foreign Ministry's Objectives for 2019: An 'Improved' Iran Deal



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu delivers a speech on Iran's nuclear programme in Tel Aviv on April 30, 2018

Jack GUEZ (AFP)

Israel seeks to implement an upgraded nuclear deal with Iran, urges international cooperation

Israel's 2019 Foreign Ministry objectives indicate that Iran remains a top priority of the country's foreign service agenda, including plans for an 'improved' nuclear deal with the Islamic Republic, a document obtained by the *Haaretz* daily shows.

The document, *Haaretz* reported Wednesday, says the foreign ministry should work on developing a "system of pressure that will assure the attainment of an improved agreement that will address the flaws of the old agreement" in the wake of the United States' withdrawal from the Iran deal.

With steps outlined in the document categorized under the heading “Stopping Iran – Nuclear, Terror, Missiles and Subversion” the foreign ministry also calls for the need for dialogue with the international community concerning the role of Iran and its proxies in Syria, *Haaretz* reports.

The document reflects Netanyahu’s well-espoused policies regarding Iranian threats, an issue he has made clear is a top priority for his government. *Haaretz* reports that an additional clause has been added to this year’s outlined objectives which calls for “diversifying those we rely on, including establishing and deepening ties with Russia.”

Strengthening ties with Egypt and Jordan also appear throughout the document, *Haaretz* reports.



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu presents material on Iranian nuclear weapons development during a press conference in Tel Aviv, Israel, Monday, April 30, 2018.

AP Photo/Sebastian Scheiner

Speaking to the Foreign Ministry in September of 2018, Netanyahu discussed the need to scrap the existing 2015 nuclear deal, but acknowledged that the accord

had brought Israel closer to Iranian rivals in the Arab world.

“The agreement with Iran was a bad agreement in every respect except for one – it brought us closer to the Arab world on a scale that we never knew, and one of our goals is that it continues,” Netanyahu said in a speech at the Foreign Ministry.

Netanyahu has repeatedly said that Sunni states have been making overtures to Israel, spurred by the perceived mutual threat of Iran, the Middle East’s predominant Shiite power, which both accuse of fueling regional conflicts by supporting armed proxies in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Bahrain.

In reference to Israel’s relationship with the US, the 2019 objectives include calls for “preparing for the completion of US administration efforts to renew the diplomatic process with the participation of pragmatic countries in the Middle East and partners in the international community.”

The document also calls for bipartisanship relationships and “strengthening ties with the Democratic Party” in anticipation of the 2018 midterm elections, considering the fear of backlash to President Trump and his policies in the Middle East



People walk on May 11, 2018 near the compound of the US consulate in Jerusalem, which will host Washington's new embassy, as posters praising President Donald Trump hang above them

THOMAS COEX (AFP)

A recent Gallup poll showed that support for Netanyahu in the US was a highly bipartisan issue, with only 17% of Democrats holding favorable views of the Israeli leader compared to 64% of Republicans and 30% of independents.

An earlier survey by the Pew Research Center showed that the divide between Democrats and Republicans regarding their overall support for Israel was “wider than at any point since 1978.”

According to *Haaretz*, the foreign ministry document calls for increased diplomatic effort in securing recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel by countries across the world. So far Paraguay and Guatemala are the only countries to follow in the United State's contentious footsteps of recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

Differing from the 2018 objectives in regards to Gaza, *Haaretz* reports that the 2019 document emphasizes that the foreign ministry should focus on achieving long-term calm in the Gaza Strip by “emphasizing the prevention of a humanitarian crisis.”

Advancing Israel's defense exports reportedly remains a central national goal, including an emphasis on cyber-technology.

The document urges “the promotion of security cooperation and the fight against terrorism, with an emphasis on defense exports, as a result of the war on radical Islam, as a basis for strategic cooperation in the region, Europe and other diplomatic arenas, and leveraging this to build up diplomatic achievements.”

Israel is already among the world's top arms dealers, with defense exports having reached a record \$9.2 billion in 2017.

Source: <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/183490-180905-israel-s-2019-foreign-policy-goals-new-and-improved-iran-deal>

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