

# Trump Is Israel's "Useful Idiot"

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Featured image: Benjamin Netanyahu, Reuven Rivlin and Donald Trump at the Ben Gurion airport.

Image credit: [Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs/ flickr](#)

*The claim made by many neoconservatives that Israel and the United States are partners in the Middle East because their strategic interests are identical is belied by the fact that the Israelis are more than willing to ignore Washington when it suits them to do so. The claim of identical interests has always been false, promoted by the Zionist media and an intensively lobbied Congress to make the lopsided relationship with an essentially racist and apartheid regime more palatable to the American public, but, in wake of the slaughter in Gaza and pending legislation in the Knesset empowering Israeli communities to ban non-Jewish residents, it completely lacks any credibility.*

It would probably surprise most American friends of Israel to learn that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has visited Moscow three times so far this year, particularly as Russia has been getting vilified in the U.S. mainstream media on an almost daily basis. There is a reason for the Russophobia beyond what Moscow might or might not have done in the 2016 election. Russia has become a particular target of hostility for the burgeoning number of neoconservative foundations, also closely linked to Israel, whose funding from defense contractors depends on having a powerful enemy. The ability of Israel and its supporters to play both sides regardless of what the accepted perception of what American interests might be should therefore be an issue of some concern.

The United States military is deeply engaged in Syria, in part due to Israeli pressure, seeking to depose the existing government of President Bashar al-Assad and replace it with a Syria composed primarily of fragmented local jurisdictions representing tribal and religious groups rather than a unified state. Israel believes that a shattered Syria would not pose any threat to its continued possession of the occupied Golan Heights and might even offer an opportunity to expand that occupation.

In response to Israeli interests, the U.S. has sought regime change in Syria and has toyed with the creation of mini states within the country controlled by the Kurds and the so-called moderate rebels. It would mean the end of Syria as a nation, which has been [an Israeli objective since 1967](#). Israel has contributing to the turmoil by attacking targets inside Syria. The targets are generally described as either "Iranian" or "Hezbollah," but they have also included Syrian Army installations. One such attack took place [last week](#) after a drone allegedly entered Israeli territory.

Israel has also collaborated with rebel groups inside Syria, to include al-Qaeda affiliates and ISIS, which puts Washington in an awkward position as it claims to be in Syria primarily to

defeat ISIS and other terrorists. In one bizarre episode, ISIS actually [apologized to Israel](#) for inadvertently attacking Israeli positions in the Golan Heights. There have also been reports of Israeli hospitals treating wounded terrorists.

The Israeli willingness to play all sides in the Syrian conflict recognizes that Russia rather than the United States has assumed the pivotal role in determining what the ultimate political outcome of the fighting is likely to be. Apart from weakening and fragmenting Syria itself, Israel's clearly stated objective has been to reduce or, even better, eliminate Iranian presence in the country, which Netanyahu describes hyperbolically as "...very important for the national security of the state of Israel."

Benjamin Netanyahu's visits to Russia can be seen as efforts to get Moscow's backing to pushback against Iran, admittedly a Sisyphean task as both Russia and Iran are in Syria by invitation of the legitimate government and both have been critical to the success of Damascus's successful counter-offensive. There are, however, differences in perception, as Moscow's role has been limited and largely high-tech while Iran has supplied as many as 80,000 of the foot soldiers in the conflict. Russia would prefer that Syria not become an Iranian satrapy after the fighting is over.

With both Iran and Israel courting Russian favor, President Vladimir Putin hosted last week [back-to-back visits](#) by Netanyahu and Iranian senior foreign policy adviser Ali Akbar Velayati. Netanyahu was open about his desire to explain to Putin why a significant Iranian presence in Syria post-war would be undesirable and even dangerous. He pushed for restoration of a United Nations monitored demilitarized zone along the Golan Heights and also for complete withdrawal of Iranian forces from the country. In return, the Russians suggested that [they would support](#) an Iranian military presence "tens of kilometers" away from the Israeli border, but Putin also made clear that Syria would be reunited under its government in Damascus and that the Iranians should have a role in the country's reconstruction and defense. Netanyahu did not get what he wanted but the conversation with a basically friendly Russia will continue. Expect more visits.

The Iranians, for their part, were dealing with the broader issue of impending United States sanctions on the Iranian oil industry. They obtained a commitment from Putin to continue investment in Iranian oil development and also to continue cooperation to stabilize Syria and drive out the last of the so-called rebels. As Russia is an energy exporter, the issue of buying Iranian oil was irrelevant, but Velayati was reportedly on his way to China to press for a commitment from Beijing to continue purchases of oil in spite of the threat of sanctions from Washington after November 4th.

Whatever one believes about the Syrian conflict and Washington's role in it, the adherence to Israeli points of view in framing policy has made the United States largely irrelevant and has handed control of the situation to enemy du jour Russia. The Israelis have found the new administration in Washington to be what Lenin once described as a "useful idiot," prepared to support whatever Netanyahu proposes while at the same time so clueless that the Israeli government can freely and openly simultaneously cut deals with Moscow that undermine the U.S. continued presence in the country.

Donald Trump's [recent comment](#) that the United States might move to get out of Syria completely by the end of the year suggests that he might actually be figuring things out and is no longer willing to be the Israeli patsy in developments in that country. It just might also

be that the White House has finally realized that continued engagement in Syria is a lose-lose no matter how it turns out.

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*This article was originally published on [American Herald Tribune](#).*

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