



*Jehlum Post News Network/Lalit K Jha /Washington/ Mar 25, 2015/US President Barack Obama has said that he shares a business-like relationship with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu but acknowledged that they have substantive differences over a two-state solution to the vexed Palestinian issue. "I have a very business-like relationship with the Prime Minister. I've met with him more than any other world leader. I talk to him all the time.*

*He is representing his country's interests the way he thinks he needs to, and I'm doing the same," Obama said addressing a joint press conference with Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani Wednesday .He maintained that a two-state solution was "the best path forward for Israel's security, for Palestinian aspirations and for regional stability." "Prime Minister Netanyahu has a different approach. So this can't be reduced to a matter of somehow let's all, you know, hold hands and sing Kumbaya. This is a matter of figuring out how do we get through a policy difference that has great consequences for both countries and for the region," he told reporters at the White House. The US President said that he took Netanyahu at his word that there would not be a two-state solution in the Middle East as long as he is in power."I took him at his word that that's what he meant and I think that a lot of voters inside of Israel understood him to be saying that unequivocally," Obama said. He said Netanyahu's comments during campaign ruling out a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict require his administration to re-evaluate its approach toward advocating for peace between them. "What we can't do is pretend that there's a possibility of something that is not there. We can't continue to premise our public diplomacy based on something that everybody knows is not going to happen, at least in the next several years."*

*Obama, however, said the US would continue to cooperate with Israel on security, military and intelligence front. "I think it is hard to envision how that happens, based on the prime minister's statements. When I said that we have to now do an evaluation of where we are, it's not in reference to our commitment to Israel's military edge in the region, Israel's security, our intelligence cooperation, our military cooperation. That continues unabated," he said. He said Netanyahu's efforts to clarify his comments set forward a series of conditions in which a Palestinian state could potentially be created "but of course the conditions were such that they would be impossible to meet any time soon". Obama is considering introducing a UN resolution that establishes the parameters and definitions for a two-state solution, a move that will be mightily opposed by the Israeli government and Republicans in Congress. Netanyahu has been constantly at loggerheads with President Obama and his recent efforts to undermine the US leader by addressing the Congress without coordinating with the White House has widened the rift. Agency*