

Israeli Officials Likely on Damage Control Mission as Iran Nuclear Deal Revival Nears

Daniel Sonnenfeld / May 2, 2021

Biden, Blinken and Sullivan have all met in Washington with Israeli security officials in the last week

The round of meetings between Israeli security officials and high-ranking members of the Biden team continued Friday in Washington, DC, when Mossad intelligence agency head Yossi Cohen met US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan. President Joe Biden was also present at the meeting, although it is unclear to what extent. Israeli media reported that the meeting was between Biden and Cohen, while the US National Security Council said the president “dropped by” to offer his condolences for the disaster on Mount Meron in Israel’s north, in which a deadly stampede left 45 people dead.

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“It’s obvious to Israel that the administration is determined to return to the agreement,” said Col. (res.) **Eldad Shavit**, an expert on Middle East security and US-Israel relations at **Tel Aviv University’s Institute for National Security Studies**. “It’s possible that they are pointing out the negative consequences of returning to the agreement in these meetings,” he told The Media Line, adding that it appears more likely that Israel’s officials are now focused on the day after the return to the agreement, attempting to minimize the damage that a return to the deal may cause.

“It doesn’t end with a return to the agreement,” Shavit said. For example, it is of vital importance to Israel that the inspection of Iran’s nuclear sites under the agreement be carried out properly. Jerusalem also wants Iran to be pressured to halt its belligerent activities in the region, which include supporting the Houthi rebels in Yemen and Hizbullah in Lebanon, the latter a constant threat to Israel.

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