

---

U.S. Blasts Winner Netanyahu for “Divisive” Re-Election Campaign

19/03/2015



U.S. officials are “deeply concerned about rhetoric that seeks to marginalize Arab-Israeli citizens,” spokesman Josh Earnest told reporters accompanying President Barack Obama to Cleveland.

Netanyahu, seeking to encourage supporters of his rightist Likud party to cast their ballots, warned during Tuesday’s voting that “Arab voters are streaming in huge quantities” to the polls.

Such “divisive” rhetoric “undermines the values and democratic ideals that have been important to our democracy and an important part of what binds the United States and Israel together,” Earnest said.

Regarding Netanyahu’s vow on Monday not to allow the creation of a Palestinian state, the White House spokesman said that the United States continues to see the two-state solution as the best option for reducing tensions in the region.

Pursuit of a negotiated two-state settlement – an approach Netanyahu supported in the past – has been U.S. policy for “more than 20 years,” Earnest pointed out.

In light of Netanyahu’s apparent change of position, Washington needs to “re-evaluate our approach,” the spokesman said.

Secretary of State John Kerry telephoned Netanyahu to congratulate him on his victory and

Obama will do likewise in the coming days, Earnest said.

The already difficult relationship between Obama and Netanyahu suffered new strains earlier this month when the Israeli prime minister appeared before a joint session of Congress to denounce the Washington-led negotiation with Iran over Tehran's nuclear program.

---