



White House

[\[Print\]](#) [\[Email\]](#)

[Share](#)



# Obama in tight spot on Gaza conflict

By: [Julie Mason](#)

Examiner White House Correspondent

June 8, 2010

With no letup in tensions surrounding Israel's recent attack on a Gaza-bound ship, the White House is looking for a new direction on easing conflict in the region.

On Wednesday, President Obama will meet with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas at the White House. On Monday, Vice President Biden discussed the matter in Turkey with President Hosni Mubarak.

"We are consulting closely with Egypt, as well as our other partners, on new ways to address the humanitarian, economic, security and political aspects of the situation in Gaza," Biden said.

In a tough spot between key allies, the White House has declined to condemn Israel for the May 31 incident, in which nine people were killed on a Turkish-owned ship trying to run relief supplies through an Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip.

Before arriving in Washington, Abbas will stop in Turkey, where public and government outrage over the incident has been uncommonly intense.

"Turkey has been raising its diplomatic profile and increasing its influence in regions beyond its borders, particularly in the Middle East," said Bulent Aliriza, an expert on Turkey at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

The government of Turkey had hoped to put international pressure on Israel to end its four-year-old blockade of Gaza.

For the Obama administration, the incident presents several challenges on multiple fronts -- including its close alliance with Israel, efforts to broker peace in the Middle East, the president's outreach to Muslims, and the U.S. relationship with Turkey, among others.

Also at issue for the White House are numerous U.S. based interest groups -- including those who supported Obama politically -- with a strong stake in the Middle East peace process.

A planned meeting at the White House between Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

was scrapped last week after the flotilla incident.

So far, the administration has split the difference in a way that has made no side of the multi-faceted dispute happy, by proceeding with an excess of caution.

"The current arrangements are unsustainable and must be changed," National Security Council spokesman Mike Hammer said of the delivery of aid to the Gaza Strip.

But, "For now, we call on all parties to join us in encouraging responsible decisions by all sides to avoid any unnecessary confrontations," he said.

Michael Oren, Israel's ambassador to the U.S., told Fox News that Israelis are "open to any ideas," but that allowing sea access to Gaza would permit Hamas, the Islamist group that controls Gaza, to acquire sufficient arms to threaten Israel and "kill" the peace process.

"The administration is in an impossible situation, to be honest with you," said Christopher Preble, director of foreign policy studies at the libertarian Cato Institute.

Meanwhile, the administration has extended itself on the peace process, he said "and the ability to deliver what five administrations tried and failed to do."

[jmason@washingtonexaminer.com](mailto:jmason@washingtonexaminer.com)

## More from Julie Mason

- [Obama in tight spot on Gaza conflict](#)
- [Obama under fire for oil spill response](#)
- [Obama "fancy pants"?](#)
- [White House cancels overseas trip](#)
- [Obama, Ariz. governor still at odds on immigration after meeting](#)

To view this site, you need to have Flash Player 8.0 or later installed. Click [here](#) to get the latest Flash player.

#### MOST POPULAR STORIES

- [Spill reveals Obama's lack of executive experience](#)
- [Glenn Reynolds: Higher education's bubble is about to burst](#)
- [Obama brings Nixonian twist to oil spill](#)
- [Gregory Kane: Mayor Daley is wounding gun control advocacy](#)
- [What's the matter with Michigan?](#)
- [How to keep your mind sharp in 6 simple steps](#)
- [Obama 2008: I ran a big campaign, so I can handle a Gulf emergency](#)
- [Rush Limbaugh gets married, again](#)
- [Mexico opens California office to provide ID for illegals](#)
- [Politico: Get ready to lose your insurance under Obamacare](#)

```
.t_links_box { font-family: arial, Helvetica, sans-serif; width: 300px; height: auto; /* border: 1px solid #ccc; */ margin: 10px 0px 10px 0px; padding: 10px; /* line-height: 10px; */ line-height: auto; height: auto; } .t_links_box p { margin: 0px padding: 0px; /* line-height: 0px; */ } .t_links_box p.heading, .heading { font-size: 11px; font-weight:bold; padding: 0; margin: 0px 0px 20px 0px; /* line-height: 10px; */ } .t_links_box .t_links { /* padding: 0px 0px 5px 0px; */ padding: 0px 0px 10px 0px; /* border-bottom: 1px solid #ccc; */ } .t_links_box .text a { font-size: 12px; text-decoration: none; font-weight:bold; color: #333; } .t_links_box .text a:hover { text-decoration: underline; } .t_links_box .before_text a { font-size: 11px; text-decoration: none; color: #333; } .t_links_box .before_text a:hover { text-decoration: underline; } .t_links_box .after_text { font-size: 11px; }
```



```
.submission { display: none; } .submission { display: none; }
```

## Reader Comments

*All comments on this page are subject to our Terms of Use and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Examiner or its staff. Comment box is limited to 200 words. Comments that advocate violence, racism, or libel as well as comments written in ALL CAPS are not permitted.*

[blog comments powered by Disqus](#)

## Sports

### [Nats blow late lead, fall in 10 to Reds, 5-4](#)

Nationals starting pitcher Craig Stammen shook hands... [Full story](#)

## Sports



### [Nadal beats Soderling for 5th French title](#)

Accustomed to being on the move, Rafael Nadal fidgeted... [Full story](#)

## Politics

### [GOP noticing Colorado outsider's Senate bid](#)

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, COLO. - It seemed certain who would... [Full story](#)



[RSS](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Intern](#) | [Video](#) | [Maps](#) | [Mobile](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Rack Locations](#) | [Advertise](#)

#### Find this article at:

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/politics/white-house/Obama-in-tight-spot-on-Gaza-conflict-95818189.html>

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.