

Obama warns Israel could lose US support at UN

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Barack Obama has warned that America's veto in support of Israel at the UN is increasingly "difficult" because of prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's wavering stance on a Palestinian state.

Mr Obama said the lack of progress in peace efforts, and Mr Netanyahu's apparent about-turn on support for a two-state solution before and after the recent Israel elections, mean Israel is in danger of losing "credibility".



Israel prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu (AP)

"Up until this point, we have pushed away against European efforts, for example, or other efforts because we've said, the only way this gets resolved is if the two parties work together," said Mr Obama in the interview with Israel's channel 2 on Tuesday.

"If, in fact, there's no prospect of an actual peace process, if nobody believes there's a peace process, then it becomes more difficult to argue with those who are concerned about settlement construction, those who are concerned about the current situation."

In response to a question about Mr Netanyahu's comments regarding the establishment of a Palestinian state before and after March elections, Mr Obama said: "The danger here is that Israel as a whole loses credibility. Already, the international community does not believe that Israel is serious about a two-state solution."

Mr Netanyahu sparked international concern when he ruled out the establishment of a Palestinian state while campaigning for the March 17 general election but later backtracked on the comments.

On Sunday, Mr Netanyahu said he was committed to the establishment of a Palestinian state, calling on the Palestinian leadership to return to negotiations unconditionally.

Mr Obama however said Mr Netanyahu's statements on the subject after the election have had "so many caveats, so many conditions, that it is not realistic to think that those conditions would be met any time in the near future."

"And I think that it is difficult to simply accept at face value the statement made after an election that would appear to look as if this is simply an effort to return to the previous status quo in which we talk about peace in the abstract, but it's always tomorrow, it's always later," Mr Obama said.

Prospects for a renewal of peace talks, which fell apart in April 2014, look bleak with the lack of trust between the sides exacerbated by the formation of Mr Netanyahu's new hardline coalition after the recent elections.

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