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Israel Shames Biden With Massive New Settlement Announcement

Posted By [Jason Ditz](#)

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The US [shrugged off Israel's small settlement announcement yesterday, insisting that it would have no impact on peace talks](#), even as Palestinian officials were condemning it and analysts were wondering why Israel did so as Vice President Joe Biden was arriving in the nation. Today, the other shoe fell.

Vice President Biden was in the nation still today, delivering the sort of pro-Israel speech one might expect from him – [complete with the claim that Israel's government is the "central bolt" that allows all existence to even be possible](#). Not long after, Israeli Interior Minister Eli Yishai announced one of the largest settlement expansions in years, 1,600 new housing units that are almost certain to derail the peace talks and which [Israel's media says has humiliated Biden, the highest ranking Obama Administration official yet to visit the nation](#).

Biden [condemned the new settlement announcement in as clear a terms as possible](#), but was clearly shaken. He arrived 90 minutes late for a dinner meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu, and his planned meeting with Mahmoud Abbas, aimed at kick-starting the peace talks, will be awkward to say the least.

Netanyahu was quick to [praise Biden as a "true friend of Israel," and to deny that the move was designed to embarrass him](#). Yishai's opposition to the peace talks hasn't

exactly been a secret, however, and the timing seems clearly designed to do the maximum possible damage to the peace process.