Robert Malley, Israel's Bête Noire, Appointed Middle East Assistant to Obama

Robert Malley Senior Assistant to National Security Adviser on MENA, Obama White House

[Robert Malley](#) has been a controversial policy insider and opponent of Israel in both the Clinton and Obama Administrations. Malley faulted Israel for the collapse of the 2000 Peace negotiations with former Israeli PM Ehud Barak at Camp David stoking the late Yassir Arafat to opt for the Second Intifada.

Last Friday, the White House announced his new position as Senior Assistant to the President coordinating policies of North Africa, the Middle East and Iran nuclear negotiations. He replaces Phillip Gordon (no relation). He was recently involved in meetings with Rice and Israeli National Security Adviser Yossi Cohen in the run up to Israeli PM Netanyahu's address to the Joint Meeting of Congress on March 3rd.

Look upon Malley's promotion as a bad omen for worsening relations with Israel unless Netanyahu is not elected for a third term on March 17th. He was brought back to the Obama National Security Council in 2013 as a deputy to Gordon who had the MENA portfolio.   There had been adverse criticism of his role as foreign policy adviser to President Obama in the 2008 Presidential campaign on Israel issues. He was accused of having held discussions with Iran proxies Hezbollah and Hamas. In the interim before his return to the NSC, he had an

equivalent post at the International Crisis Group. His parents, while both Jewish, were leftists who supported pro-Arab anti-Israel activities in both Egypt and Algeria.

The Times of Israel (TOI) reported last weekend on this latest move by the Administration to isolate Israel under the current Netanyahu government, [White House names Israel critic to top Mideast post:](#)

> The White House named Robert Malley, a US negotiator at the 2000 Camp David talks, to lead the Middle East desk at the National Security Council. Malley, whose appointment was announced on Friday afternoon, since last year has handled the Iraq-Iran-Syria-Gulf States desk. In replacing Philip Gordon, who has been Middle East coordinator since 2013, he assumes responsibility for Israel and the Palestinians as well as North Africa and the Persian Gulf.
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> He also assumes a more senior title, moving from senior director to special assistant. Malley already deals with Israel, and has attended meetings on the Iran-nuclear issue between his boss, National Security Adviser Susan Rice, and her Israeli counterpart, Yossi Cohen.

We wrote about Malley's foreign policy advisor background in a March 2014 Iconoclast post, [Saudi-led Gulf Squabble Spells Trouble for Obama?](#)

> National Security Advisor Malley was a former Middle East [foreign policy aide](#) to President Clinton during the failed 2000 Camp David Israel-Palestinian negotiations between former Israeli PM Ehud Barak and the late Yassir Arafat. Malley had accused Israel of nixing the agreement, when it was evident that Arafat had purposely sabotaged it. Malley went on to become head of the Middle East and North African program of the International Crisis Group and later advised then Senator Obama and was part of the President's transition team. He holds views that may

further complicate Administration Middle East policies. Malley propounded speaking with terrorist proxies Hamas and Hezbollah as well as the Muslim Brotherhood. Malley, was appointed in 2013 to the National Security Council. He had the portfolio for Israel-Palestinian peace talks and the Iran nuclear P5+1 diplomatic initiative.

In October 2009, we noted his family background and Soros connections in a post [Robert Malley and Benny Morris debate One State/Two State Solution at Skidmore College](#):

> Malley is Jewish on both sides. His father was a Mizrahi from Syria who became an Egyptian journalist and was alleged to be an Egyptian Communist party member who fled to France, where young Malley was raised. Malley's mother was a US Jewish leftist who worked for the Algerian FLN UN delegation. Check out his