

# Who Is in Charge of US Foreign Policy?

Is it Israel and its Powerful Lobby or The White House or No One at all?

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*It probably would surprise no one to learn that **there are several viewpoints among critics of the current wars devastating the Middle East** regarding who is actually encouraging a growing bloody conflict which might soon involve at least six countries in the region. In simple terms, there is a school of thought that believes that Israel, backed by its various powerful diaspora lobbies, is defying world opinion to continue its slaughter of its indigenous Palestinians and neighboring Lebanese. In other words, it is all about Israel acting maliciously and badly.*

However, another viewpoint sees instead a neocon-dominated United States foreign policy exploiting Israeli truculence and its hard right-wing leadership to carry out American national objectives in the region, in a sense using Israel as its proxy and actually encouraging its bad behavior. Meanwhile, a third plausible examination of developments tends to meld the two approaches, suggesting that the US and Israel are in a conspiratorial cooperative relationship and are in full agreement regarding reducing the power of the Jewish state's neighbors. That would make Israel the preeminent military power dominating the Persia Gulf and beyond to control a large chunk of the world's energy resources while also benefiting American weapons manufacturers and other political and Wall Street constituencies.

The problem is that there is sufficient carefully selected evidence to support every point of view including an alternative suggestion that American foreign policy is broken, adrift and does not reflect any US national interest at all, witness the recent \$8.7 billion [aid package](#) sent to a belligerent Israel when Americans were dying in North Carolina in the wake of a devastating hurricane for which FEMA only provided meager assistance because it claimed it had run out of money. The steady flow of money and weapons from the US to Israel suggests that the United States is for some reason supporting Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's expansion of the war against Hamas when the White House could have ended the war in a day by cutting off that support. Alternatively, Israel might be seen as continuing its slaughter in spite of perhaps insincere US objections because it presumes that its powerful Lobby in the US will keep **Joe Biden** in line with an election coming up lest it weigh in heavily to help **Donald Trump**. And, of course, if the two nations are acting in collusion it could all be Kabuki with Washington and Tel Aviv cynically intending to do whatever it takes reshape the Middle East to Israel's benefit. Take your choice of which scenario fits best.

One needs to determine what actually justifies the reality of a multiplicity of fronts, to include providing political cover in the UN, where the United States is interacting to support "greatest ally and best friend" Israel while at the same time constantly verbalizing the apparently false claim that it is trying to avoid the conflict's expanding into a major

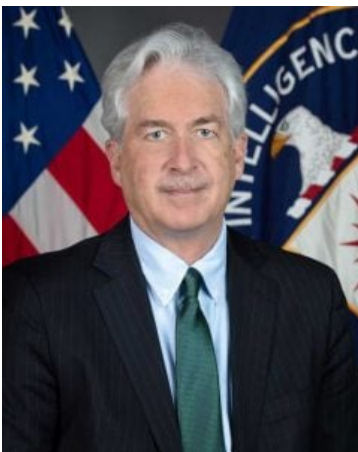
conflagration that could engulf the entire region and beyond, driving up energy costs dramatically just for starters. Such a managed co-escalation might also increase the risks and costs geometrically as more players get involved, up to and including the possibility that Israel will opt to use its nuclear weapons to “defend” itself or to attack Iran, which is where both Russia and the United States might become involved in a nuclear exchange to defend their respective “friends.”

So what is the truth and what are the lies and who in Washington and/or Tel Aviv is calling the shots in the Middle East? And what do they really intend and how do they see it all ending?

There are four obvious US government players who are on the ground and meeting with the key figures in the nations involved in the fighting as well as with those ostensibly engaged in the what are being called negotiations to put an end to the killing with a ceasefire acceptable to all parties. One must concede that their task is a difficult one at best as all parties to the peace talks recognize that the United States is not an unbiased intermediary given its total commitment to support Israel politically as well as with arms and money while freely labeling the Jewish state’s neighbors and opponents alike as “terrorists” and “autocrats.”

The four would be composed of two obvious officials Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) **Director William Burns** and **Secretary of State Antony Blinken** while a third and fourth are not-so-well-known, consisting of special negotiator for the president **Amos Hochstein** and the White House Coordinator for the Middle East **Brett McGurk**. Both Burns and Blinken have made numerous trips to the Middle East and Ukraine to convey the views of the president and make their own assessments of the situation on the ground after meeting with local officials.

Image is from The Unz Review



The role is rather unusual for Burns as a CIA Director normally operates behind the scenes and does not get involved in policy making, but Burns is not a typical director in that he has no background in intelligence. He was a highly regarded State Department officer who wound up as the US Ambassador to Russia. He very carefully worked through the nuances of the US-Russian relationship and was highly praised for explaining things from the Kremlin perspective so US planners would be able to understand very clearly the differing perspectives of the two nations. He described, for example, how very sensitive Russia was over the issue of Ukraine becoming part of NATO, a warning which was subsequently

ignored by President Biden.

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Blinken is, of course, better known as he served as Deputy Secretary of State during the Barack Obama administration and is regarded as a particularly close associate of Joe Biden. As Secretary of State he has been a very active traveler throughout both the Middle East and Ukraine. Blinken is Jewish and is regarded as a protector of Israel, which is, of course, also the President's frequently enunciated view. After the Israeli assassination of Hezbollah leader Nasrallah he said that the "World is safer without Nasrallah..." whereas most of the world would quite reasonably prefer to see **Benjamin Netanyahu** removed. Blinken also [appears to favor](#) preemptively attacking Iran to eliminate its nuclear energy program even though there is no evidence that it is weapons-development related. He has recently come under pressure for lying about two State Department reports that indicated very clearly that Israel has been deliberately starving and killing the Gazans by blocking US supplied food and medicine supplies at the border. One large convoy of trucks containing enough food to feed most of the local people who were in danger of dying from starvation was deliberately held up at the border until the food became rotten and had to be destroyed. Blinken lied both to Congress and to the American people about the Israeli policy, saying that blocking food supplies by Israel was not taking place. It was a consequential lie as people died and are continuing to die because of it and Blinken has paid no price for what must surely be considered a major war crime.

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The third policy planner is an unusual individual **Amos Hochstein**, who was born in Israel and served in the Israeli Army. He has been designated as Biden's personal roving ambassador in the Middle East with a particular brief to work to avoid the expansion of the Gaza fighting into Lebanon against Hezbollah. In that effort, he has obviously failed as both Israel and Lebanon now consider themselves to be at war. It is presumed that Hochstein is the "active arm" in the White House campaign to shield Israel from any harm initiated by its much abused neighbors. Why anyone would select an Israeli who is a product of the Israeli Army as a negotiator of some type among the nations that the Israelis have been victimizing for the past seventy-five years has to be considered an enduring mystery. It is perhaps another gimmick move by Biden to pretend that he is neutral in the conflict while doing everything he can to turn Netanyahu free to destroy or subject all his neighbors.

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Which brings us to the fourth likely top planner National Security Council Coordinator for Africa and the Middle East Brett McGurk. McGurk has been a bipartisan fixture floating around the national security and diplomatic communities for a number of years with the reputation of being a "hardliner" particularly when dealing with Arabs, which is not to say that he has learned anything beyond the fact that if one wants to survive in Washington it pays to love Israel. It is interesting to note that the Biden Administration claims that it is working hard to achieve a ceasefire in both Lebanon and Gaza but it continues to cover for Israel politically and provide it with the weapons and money to continue its genocidal activities as well as in support of its plan to occupy southern Lebanon to create a "buffer zone." Israeli media is already reporting that real estate agents are offering attractive properties for Jewish buyers in what is still Lebanon, just as Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner has been peddling exclusive sea front lots in Gaza. In other words, don't believe anything coming out of the Biden Administration as evidence for anything as it appears that its "policy makers" and press spokesmen have acquired the Israeli tendency to lie about everything.

*Politico* has [a recent piece on](#) both Hochstein and McGurk and it does not make one feel warm and fuzzy about what the Biden administration is up to. The article is entitled: "US officials quietly backed Israel's military push against Hezbollah -The officials urged caution and stressed the need for diplomacy. But the timing was right for such a military shift, they concluded". It seems that the guys who are promoted by the Biden administration as peacemakers are anything but. *Politico* obtained insider information from a number of anonymous sources in both Washington and Israel and learned that Biden's team has actually agreed with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's broad strategy to shift Israel's military focus to the north against Hezbollah. This tilt, contrary to what the White

House has been preaching, produced a reaction from a number of Pentagon, intelligence and State Department officials that such a move would drag the United States into the war, which is really what Netanyahu intended, but the shift in policy was approved anyway. One senior US official noted but dismissed the flaw in a policy of calling for peace while encouraging war as “Both things can be true — the US can want diplomacy and support Israel’s larger goals against Hezbollah. There’s clearly a line that the administration is toeing, it’s just not clear what that line is.”

In spite of concerns from some in the government that a reckless Israel will go too far and ignite a major regional war that could easily spread beyond the Middle East, *Politico* reports how Hochstein and McGurk worked “behind the scenes” to encourage Israel and they are now describing Israel’s Lebanon operations likely to include a major land invasion as a “history-defining moment” — one that will “reshape the Middle East for the better for years to come.” That would seem to confirm that the United States and Israel are in fact collaborating and the US is fully complicit and *de facto* supporting the genocidal intention of Netanyahu to make a new Greater Israel largely free of Arabs. For the US, the extra benefit gained from defeating Hezbollah will be that it ultimately weakens Iran, neocon Washington’s perpetual arch enemy, which relies on Hezbollah as a proxy and a resource for projecting power. Of course, it could all go the other way and the joint American-Israeli plan could come to naught. Hezbollah notably routed invading Israeli forces in south Lebanon back in 2006 and it is better trained and equipped now than it was then. And what happens if Israeli army is in trouble and the US is forced to act on its pledge to “defend” the Jewish state, thereby leading a small war to expand and include Iran and Russia? The ball will be in your court Mr. Biden, or possibly Mr. Trump or Ms. Harris. Consider carefully how you will play it but if you really do want a ceasefire, I wouldn’t send Blinken, Hochstein and McGurk around to do the negotiating.

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*Featured image: The Israeli and American flags displayed on the walls of the Old City in Jerusalem (Photo: Yonatan Sindel)*

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