

Report Says Obama, Biden, Kerry Boycotting AIPAC Conference



Washington, February 27 (RHC)-- U.S. President Barack Obama, Vice President Joe Biden and Secretary of State John Kerry will boycott next week's annual conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) lobbying group, a report says.

The Wall Street Journal reports that the move indicates the Obama administration's strained relations with Israel over Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's planned speech to Congress next week. The report said White House officials are looking to send any other official who is available to the conference hosted by Washington's strongest pro-Israel lobby.

House of Representatives Speaker John Boehner invited Netanyahu to address a joint session of Congress on March 3rd against Iran without the blessing of the White House.

In an interview earlier this week, U.S. National Security Advisor Susan Rice said Netanyahu's acceptance of Boehner's invitation is "destructive" to the Israeli-American ties. "I think it's destructive of the fabric of the relationship," she said in an interview with journalist Charlie Rose on American broadcaster PBS.

Boehner has also been criticized by Obama and members of Congress who say the timing of this invitation "appears to be an attempt to promote new sanctions legislation against Iran that could undermine critical negotiations between the P5+1 and Iran."

The Obama administration has already said there would be no meeting between Obama and Netanyahu, arguing it would not be appropriate to hold such a meeting as Israel is approaching its March 17th elections.

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