

# Netanyahu to Obama: 'Only Israel's Citizens Decide'

"No one decides for the citizens of Israel," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Wednesday, in an exclusive interview with *Israel Hayom*. The prime minister was responding to a recent Jeffrey Goldberg article in *Bloomberg View* that quoted U.S. President Barack Obama as saying that "Israel doesn't know what its own best interests are."

In the interview, the full version of which will be published on Friday, Netanyahu said he did not know whether Obama was behind Goldberg's article, but he stressed: "I think that President Obama knows that the ones determining Israel's vital interests are the citizens of Israel, and they will be the ones to choose who will protect those interests in the best possible way."

Netanyahu also touched on alleged tensions with Obama during a tour of a Gaza Division base on Wednesday, telling soldiers that "everyone understands that only Israel's citizens will determine who faithfully represents the vital objectives of the State of Israel."

Speaking to *Israel Hayom*, Netanyahu said: "I can see three main objectives. Preventing Iran from arming themselves with nuclear weapons, not going back to the indefensible 1967 borders, and keeping Jerusalem united. These are fundamental objectives."

Politicians tend to call every election "critical," but in light of the dramatic developments in the Middle East and global economy, that characterization seems apt this time around.

"Many people want to support me as prime minister," Netanyahu said. "So I am asking them to give me the power to succeed and

to lead. We have begun changing things. The horizon is in sight.”

Netanyahu forcefully rejected Hatnuah party leader Tzipi Livni’s fear tactics regarding Israel’s ties with the U.S.

“The relationship between Israel and the U.S. is rock solid,” Netanyahu said. “There is tight security and intelligence cooperation. There are also differences of opinion regarding the best way to achieve peace. This is not new.”

Netanyahu also touched on recent claims that President Shimon Peres had interfered in the election.

“There are many things we agree on and also more than a few things we disagree on,” Netanyahu said of Peres. “Ultimately, it is the government of Israel that sets Israel’s policies.”

In an interview with Army Radio on Thursday, Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon said the Obama administration was interfering in the Israeli election because some Israeli politicians had expressed support for Obama’s Republican challenger Mitt Romney in the U.S. presidential election last November.

“We were dragged into the recent election in the U.S., partly due to a lack of understanding by some here in Israel and partly because of certain elements within the U.S. who pushed us into a corner regarding the election,” Ayalon said.