Vance says some in Israeli government sought to sway US on Iran deal

By Reuters

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U.S. Vice President JD Vance speaks at This is the Turning Point Tour at the University of Georgia in Athens, Georgia, U.S., April 14, 2026. REUTERS/Alyssa Pointer/File Photo Purchase Licensing Rights

Summary

- Comments deepen public split between Washington and Netanyahu's government
- Israeli officials, speaking anonymously, say the Iran deal ignored core security concerns
- Vance said foreign lobbying only matters when it distorts U.S. decision-making

JERUSALEM, July 16 (Reuters) - U.S. Vice President JD Vance said some members of the Israeli government had tried to influence U.S. public opinion to oppose a deal by the U.S. to end the war with Iran, in a podcast episode with host Joe Rogan posted on Wednesday.

The comments echoed earlier criticism of Israeli government policy by Vance, whom many view as a potential future presidential candidate, in a widening public rift between the two countries.

Vance defended a deal reached last month to end the war with Iran, which critics in the U.S. and Israel have slammed for failing to curb Iran's missile program and providing no clear path to dismantling its nuclear facilities, while constraining Israel in its war with Hezbollah militants in Lebanon.

"I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that there have been people within the Israeli government who are trying to, like, actually shift us away from that policy because they want to continue the military campaign," Vance said.

The vice president said that, while he has "good relationships" with some members of the Israeli government, "there are some people within their system that we know beyond a shadow of a doubt that are manipulating and trying to change American public opinion to keep the war going on indefinitely".

Vance said that many countries, allies and adversaries try to influence American policy and that "it doesn't bother me that Israel tries to do this, it frankly doesn't even bother me that Russia or some of these other countries do it". He said it was "just the nature of being a political leader in 2026".

"What does bother me is when those operations, those influence campaigns, actually affect American political judgment," said the vice president.

Vance lashed out at Israeli critics of the Iran deal in June, saying President Donald Trump is Israel's only ally, in a sharp rebuke that referenced the billions in U.S. defense aid the country receives.

Israeli senior officials, speaking anonymously, have said the deal's terms were bad for Israel because they failed to address concerns over Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile program, a view they say is shared across Israel's leadership.

When asked if he thought the U.S. would have engaged in the most recent war with Iran were it not for Israeli influence, Vance said, "yes, yes I do."

"I think the president, separate from any influence from Israel, believes very strongly, and again I agree with this, that Iran should not have a nuclear weapon," Vance said.

The Israeli Prime Minister's Office did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Vance also expressed frustration at Americans and others who say you cannot negotiate with the Iranians, despite Trump saying last week that Iranians were liars and scum and that dealing with them was a waste of time.

Asked about the apparently contradictory comments later on Thursday, White House spokeswoman Karoline Leavitt said the remarks were made at different points in the war and did not conflict.

"The president and vice president are on the exact same page about where we are right now in this conflict," Leavitt said at a briefing.

Reporting by Emily Rose, additional reporting by Doina Chiacu in Washington; Editing by William Maclean and Sanjeev Miglani

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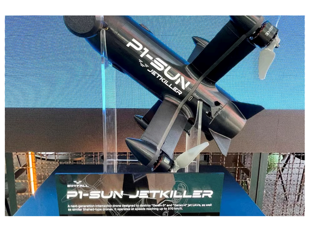

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