

But he was only partially successful: one important settlers' organisation immediately complained that he should have authorised many more buildings.

??

Like most other governments, Israel is also trying to work out what Donald Trump's foreign-policy priorities are, and how that might affect their domestic calculations. One indication of change came on January 24th, when the White House refused to comment on the new settlement plans. In the past, similar moves were met with automatic condemnation as obstacles to peace.

??124????????????????????????????????????
????????????????????

The testy relationship with the former president, Barack Obama, had its uses however—it served as a perfect excuse for Mr Netanyahu to restrain his coalition partners' enthusiasm for unbridled building and annexation. Now the settlers are convinced that Mr Trump will allow them a free hand.

????????????????????????????????????--??
??????

One reason for the uncertainty in Jerusalem is the multiple and conflicting messages arriving from Washington. The settlers have vocal support from members of Mr Trump's inner circle, especially his new ambassador to Israel, David Friedman, who heads a settlement fundraising organisation.

??

However, some of the more important appointments, including the secretary of state, Rex Tillerson, have been careful, at least so far, not to signal a significant shift in policy. Mr Netanyahu has urged his cabinet to avoid policy departures until things are clearer.

??

Another example is the new administration's policy on moving its embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Like most countries, America has been wary of recognising Jerusalem as Israel's capital before conflicting claims to it are settled in a peace agreement. On the campaign trail, however, Mr Trump promised to move the embassy to Jerusalem, a step which would enrage Arab opinion.

??
??

Since the election, members of his entourage have told Israeli officials that he plans to go ahead with the move, but on January 22nd a White House spokesman said only "we are at the very beginning stages of even discussing this subject." Palestinian leaders have also received discreet messages that the embassy will not be moving for now. The only certainty is that the Trump administration does not yet have a settled policy towards Israel and the Palestinians.

????????????????????????????????1?22????????“????????????????????”????????????????????????????
????????????????????

Mr Netanyahu is to meet the new president in Washington next month. His priority will be to use the opportunity of a more amenable administration to re-energise opposition to Iran's attempts at achieving regional supremacy. He may also seek the president's help in holding back his own supremacists at home.

??

