



# ALERT

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Updated: February 22, 2011 12:10 P.M.

## Congressional Statements on the U.N. Security Council Settlements Resolution

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### **Rep. Gary Ackerman (D-NY)**

*February 17, 2011*

I spoke with Rep. Gary Ackerman (D-N.Y.) by phone a few minutes ago. He was quite displeased with recent events, observing that "the Palestinians think they have the PR wind at their backs. They see the White House as more malleable and are taking advantage." He gave some blunt advice, telling the White House to show some "gumption" in turning back the Palestinian demands. He labels the Palestinians' gambit as an example of "the tail wagging a very flea-bitten dog." ([Washington Post](#))

**Rep. Rob Andrews (D-NJ)**

*February 17, 2011*

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call on the Administration to stand with Israel and veto the proposed anti-Israel United Nations Security Council resolution. Any compromise in our support for the State of Israel would be detrimental to efforts to bring peace and prosperity to the Middle East. The United States should veto any resolution that endangers our allies in the region and threatens the future of the peace process. We must stand with Israel and veto this resolution in the United Nations Security Council. (*Floor Statement*)

**Rep. Shelly Berkley (D-NV)**

*February 18, 2011*

I am pleased the Obama Administration chose to support negotiations, rather than one-sided UN resolutions, as the only legitimate way forward in the Middle East peace process. I hope the Arabs, having failed to force the issue at the UN, will return to the negotiating table immediately and begin the real process of reaching a solution. I praise the Obama Administration's veto, and call on the U.S. to reject any future resolutions at the UN that unfairly target Israel, and instead push the Palestinians back to negotiations, where they belong. (*Press Release*)

*February 17, 2011*

The Arabs are using the UN to distract the world from the real obstacle to peace in the Middle East: the Palestinians. They have done nothing to prepare their people for peace and refuse to come to the negotiating table, even after Israel made historic concessions on settlements. The U.S. must not fall prey to this cynical tactic and allow the Arabs to continue avoiding negotiations. I call on the Obama Administration to veto any resolutions at the UN and instead push the Palestinians back to negotiations, where they belong." ([Washington Post](#))

**Rep. Howard Berman (D-CA)**

*February 17, 2011*

"The Palestinians are undermining their own best interests in persistently pushing for a UN Security Council vote condemning Israel. Complicated final-status issues like settlements can only be resolved directly between the Israelis and Palestinians, not by the glib declarations of international fora. Nor will the Palestinians' "UN strategy" contribute to efforts to establish a Palestinian state, which can emerge only through a negotiated agreement with Israel. In fact, UN resolutions or statements, however momentarily satisfying to the Palestinians, would seriously set back those efforts by demonstrating bad

faith and signaling to the Israelis that the Palestinians prefer grandstanding to meaningful engagement.

“I strongly urge the Palestinians, for the sake of peace, to cease their efforts at the UN and return at once to the negotiating table. Should they nevertheless persist, I strongly urge the Administration to veto any UN Security Council resolution critical of Israel and to oppose use of any international forum for anti-Israel purposes. By demonstrating consistency and resolve in support of our ally Israel, the Administration will strengthen US credibility abroad.”

**Rep. Eric Cantor (R-VA)**

*February 18, 2011*

We are pleased that the Obama Administration vetoed the anti-Israel resolution before the UN Security Council today. Moving forward, we must continue to make it clear that peace cannot be imposed; it must be negotiated directly between Israelis and Palestinians. It is high time that the Palestinians return to the negotiating table, rather than skirt the peace process by bringing biased, unproductive resolutions to the United Nations. (*Press Release – Joint Statement with Rep. Eric Cantor (R-VA)*)

*February 17, 2011*

“As we wrote to the President last month, the Palestinian leadership’s decision to reject the difficult but vital responsibility of making peace with Israel through direct negotiations, and instead to advocate for anti-Israel measures by the United Nations Security Council is counterproductive and unacceptable. Successive Israeli governments have proven Israel’s steadfast commitment to peace and our Secretary of State has noted that the current Israeli government took an ‘unprecedented’ step in pursuit of peace with its ten-month moratorium on Israeli housing construction in the West Bank. Furthermore, since the beginning of the current Israeli government, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has called for direct negotiations with the Palestinians anytime and anywhere, without preconditions.

“Instead of negotiating directly with Israel to achieve a peaceful solution to the conflict, Palestinian leaders continue to seek to circumvent the negotiating process by advocating anti-Israel measures at the U.N. Security Council, U.N. General Assembly, and U.N. Human Rights Council. The U.S. should not condone or reward this behavior by supporting their resolutions. We strongly urge the Administration to veto this resolution and to uphold our longstanding commitment to Israel’s security.” (*Press Release – Joint Statement with Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-MD)*)

**Sen. Ben Cardin (D-MD)**

*February 18, 2011*

I am increasingly concerned that the United States is working on a compromise resolution at the United Nations that would comment on the legitimacy of Israeli settlement activity in order to avoid a veto at the UN Security Council.

As recent events in the Middle East demonstrate, the U.S. is often conflicted between support for our strategic priorities and a partner who fully shares our values. Such is not the case for one and only one country in the region – Israel. It is wrong to allow the Palestinians and other Arab leaders to inject their agenda on settlements into the UN. The correct forum is direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Israel has long called for direct talks “anytime and anywhere, without preconditions.”

I urge you to use all available tools at your disposal, including veto power, to prevent this UN Security Council action. We cannot allow the UN to divide the United States and Israel, particularly not at a time of such upheaval and uncertainty in the Middle East. Allies must stand together and we must do all that is possible to protect our shared values and joint national interests. (*Letter to Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton*)

**Rep. Ted Deutch (D-FL)**

*February 17, 2011*

“In a body that consistently singles out and criticizes Israel, the United States must stand firm and block any resolution, action, or comment that seeks to delegitimize Israel and, in turn, propagate continued Israel-bashing at the United Nations. This biased and one-sided resolution is totally unacceptable as it ignores the willingness of Prime Minister Netanyahu and the Israeli government to engage in immediate face to face negotiations with the Palestinians. It is absolutely essential that the United States stand in support of our great ally, Israel, and veto this dangerous resolution that only seeks to isolate and damage Israel.” (*Press Release*)

**Rep. Eliot Engel (D-NY)**

*February 17, 2011*

Washington, DC--Rep. Eliot L. Engel, a senior member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, today urged the United States to veto the pending resolution condemning Israel in the United Nations Security Council. On February 12, 2011, in response to a question by Rep. Engel in the Foreign Affairs Committee, Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg said, "We do not think the Security Council is the right place to engage on these issues."

Rep. Engel said, "It is absolutely outrageous that the U.N. Security Council will consider a resolution condemning Israel on settlements which is a final status issue. Frankly, I

think the Palestinians should be condemned for walking away from peace talks. I strongly urge the Obama Administration to veto this resolution if it comes before the Security Council."

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Below is Rep. Engel's exchange with Deputy Secretary Steinberg (Committee on Foreign Affairs, February 10, 2011):

Mr. ENGEL. [W]e have this resolution before the Security Council which condemns Israel for the settlements, and makes it seem that the settlements are the reason why there is no peace, which I think is a bunch of nonsense. I think that if the Palestinians would negotiate with the Israelis then the settlement issue, along with other issues, would be taken care of.

I would hope that if that happens, the administration would strongly and forcefully veto such a resolution as we have in the past. And I believe that the administration so far has not yet unequivocally indicated that it would do so. So I would like to ask you is that a fact, and if it is, I would strongly urge the administration to veto this resolution of the Security Council if it comes up.

Mr. STEINBERG. With respect to the Security Council, we have made very clear we do not think the Security Council is the right place to engage on these issues. I have had some success, at least for the moment, in not having that arise there. We will continue to employ the tools that we have to make sure that that continues to not happen. And we made clear both to the Palestinians and our key partners that there are other venues to discuss these issues, but the most important one of which is the one that you identified, which is the only way that this is going to be resolved is through engagement between the two parties, and that is our clear consistent position.

**Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY)**

*February 18, 2011*

Today, when a resolution that could have damaged the fragile Middle East peace process was offered at the United Nations Security Council, the United States did the right thing and stood up for a consistent and principled position. Issues involved in the peace process can only be resolved by the two parties negotiating directly with each other, and not by using the United Nations, which has a long history of hostility toward Israel, to deal with just one issue in the negotiations. (*Press Release*)

*February 17, 2011*

A vote at the Security Council on core issues in the Middle East peace process would work against our country's consistent position, which has been that such issues can only be resolved by the two parties negotiating directly with each other.

Attempts to use a venue such as the United Nations, which you know has a long history of hostility toward Israel, to deal with just one issue in the negotiations, will not move the two sides closer to a two-state solution, but rather damage the fragile trust between them. ([Politico](#))

**Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-MD)**

*February 18, 2011*

We are pleased that the Obama Administration vetoed the anti-Israel resolution before the UN Security Council today. Moving forward, we must continue to make it clear that peace cannot be imposed; it must be negotiated directly between Israelis and Palestinians. It is high time that the Palestinians return to the negotiating table, rather than skirt the peace process by bringing biased, unproductive resolutions to the United Nations. (*Press Release – Joint Statement with Rep. Eric Cantor (R-VA)*)

*February 17, 2011*

“As we wrote to the President last month, the Palestinian leadership’s decision to reject the difficult but vital responsibility of making peace with Israel through direct negotiations, and instead to advocate for anti-Israel measures by the United Nations Security Council is counterproductive and unacceptable. Successive Israeli governments have proven Israel’s steadfast commitment to peace and our Secretary of State has noted that the current Israeli government took an ‘unprecedented’ step in pursuit of peace with its ten-month moratorium on Israeli housing construction in the West Bank. Furthermore, since the beginning of the current Israeli government, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has called for direct negotiations with the Palestinians anytime and anywhere, without preconditions.

“Instead of negotiating directly with Israel to achieve a peaceful solution to the conflict, Palestinian leaders continue to seek to circumvent the negotiating process by advocating anti-Israel measures at the U.N. Security Council, U.N. General Assembly, and U.N. Human Rights Council. The U.S. should not condone or reward this behavior by supporting their resolutions. We strongly urge the Administration to veto this resolution and to uphold our longstanding commitment to Israel’s security.” (*Press Release – Joint Statement with Rep. Eric Cantor (R-VA)*)

**Rep. Steve Israel (D-NY)**

*February 17, 2011*

I am emphatically opposed to using the UN to single out Israel for criticism on the issue of settlements, whether that criticism is in the form of a resolution or a statement. Should a resolution criticizing Israel come before the Security Council, the United States should clearly veto it. To the extent that we have disagreement with Israel on policy matters, we should find a way to express those differences in private, just as we would with out other

close allies. The Administration has to understand that we stand by our friends through thick and thin.

Let's be clear; the issue isn't settlements; the issue is negotiations. Israel froze settlement construction for ten months last year. Israel has shown it is ready to take risks for peace. The onus is on the Palestinian Authority. If Palestinians object to settlements or oppose building permits; negotiate.

Israel, a friend and ally of the United States, is located in a dangerous neighborhood. Anyone who has recently watched the news or read a newspaper has seen the collapse of multilateral talks on Iran's nuclear weapons program, Hezbollah's successful effort to topple the government of Lebanon, and a wave of unrest spreading throughout the Middle East. Given the threats facing Israel, the long friendship between our two nations, and Israel's strategic importance to the United States, it is critical that the US-Israel relationship is strong at all levels of our government.

The United States is in the middle of a ten-year commitment of military aid to Israel and I hope that the long tradition of strong bipartisan support in Congress to fully fund this commitment, even at a time of fiscal constraint, continues. (*Congressional Record*)

**Rep. Peter King (D-NY)**

*February 17, 2011*

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton  
Secretary  
Department of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton:

I write today with grave concern over the pending resolution in the United Nations Security Council condemning Israeli settlement activity.

It has been reported that the United States Government will break with precedent and will not exercise its veto power on this biased resolution. Any action by the United States short of a veto is a dramatic and frightening shift in policy.

Condemnation of Israeli settlement activity as "illegitimate" will undermine the Jewish State in a body that has shown inherent bias toward it. The only way to address issues between the Palestinians and Israelis is through direct, bilateral negotiations.

I urge you to stand by our ally, Israel, and veto this resolution." (*Letter to Secretary of State Hillary R. Clinton and U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nation Susan E. Rice*)

**Sen. Mark Kirk (R-IL)**

*February 18, 2011*

The United States should never compromise on its commitment to the preeminent democracy in the Middle East. The Administration acted correctly in opposing the latest attempt by the United Nations to castigate one of America's strongest allies.

*February 17, 2011*

“I strongly urge the administration to block the latest attempt by the United Nations to castigate the State of Israel. America’s commitment to its strongest democratic ally in the Middle East should not be subject to negotiation.”

**Sen. Jon Kyl (R-AZ)**

*February 18, 2011*

There is no alternative but to veto the resolution the Palestinians are proposing at the UN; to do anything else would be to turn our back on our strongest ally in the Middle East and, in fact, to embolden anti-Israel forces in the region.

I believe it was similarly unwise for the Administration to propose an alternative, which is at best, only slightly less critical of our ally. *(Statement)*

**Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL)**

*February 17, 2011*

“Support for this anti-Israel statement is a major concession to enemies of the Jewish State and other free democracies. It telegraphs that the U.S. can be bullied into abandoning critical democratic allies and core U.S. principles.

“Palestinian leaders refuse to negotiate directly with Israel, while Israel has made unprecedented concessions and continues to repeatedly offer to negotiate anywhere, anytime. Responsible nations should be heralding Israel’s commitment to achieving peace and security, not giving credence to the relentless campaigns by anti-democratic forces to deny that commitment.

“Offering to criticize our closest ally at the UN isn’t leadership, it’s unacceptable. Pretending that criticism of Israel is OK if it comes in a ‘Presidential Statement’ instead of a resolution isn’t leadership, it’s unacceptable. Twisting and turning and tying yourself in knots to avoid using our veto to defend our allies and interests isn’t leadership, it’s unacceptable.

“The Administration should change course, stand unequivocally with Israel, and publicly pledge to block any anti-Israel UN Security Council action.” (*Press Release*)

**Rep. Nita Lowey (D-NY)**

*February 18, 2011*

The United Nations Security Council resolution on settlements is a distraction from efforts to advance the peace process. The Obama Administration was right to exercise its veto power and defeat this counterproductive resolution. I urge the Palestinians to join Israel in agreeing to begin negotiations immediately without pre-conditions.

*February 17, 2011*

“Compromising our support for Israel at the UN is not an option. The United States must veto the UN resolution on settlements to make clear we will not support such a blatant attempt to derail the peace process.” (*Statement*)

**Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ)**

*February 18, 2011*

“There are only two parties that are competent to address the issue of settlements and two parties that can move the negotiations forward. The U.S. role is in facilitating those negotiations, encouraging the parties, and using its voice and vote to object to any action that threatens to derail progress. Today, the U.S. lost sight of its role in this process and instead facilitated and encouraged anti-Israeli sentiment by conceding an argument that was not ours to concede. The United States must stand by its ally Israel and veto this flawed United Nations resolution. ”

“Moreover, the merits of any peace proposal between the Israelis and the Palestinians must always be weighed against the assurances Israel requires for its security, which is especially apparent given the current turmoil in the Middle East. Israel’s right to exist and defend itself is inalienable and must be explicitly recognized by its Arab neighbors and the United Nations.”

**Sen. Jerry Moran (R-KS)**

*February 17, 2011*

“Secretary Clinton must direct Ambassador Rice to veto the U.N. Security Council resolution condemning Israeli settlements. This resolution does nothing to further the goal of peace and is not in the interest of the United States. Peace cannot be made at the Security Council. It must be made by the Israelis and Palestinians in direct negotiations. In the midst of political upheaval in the Middle East, it is more important now than ever

that the United States stand by our ally Israel and oppose this resolution or any other one-sided action critical of Israel.” *(Press Release)*

**Sen. Bill Nelson (D-FL)**

*February 18, 2011*

The Middle East peace process is at a standstill. The United States now needs to re-assert itself as a capable mediator and bring these two “partners in peace” back to the table. Recent setbacks are not excuses to exit the process entirely. Continued bilateral negotiation remains the best way for Israelis and Palestinians to resolve their complex differences. In this region of the world, history has proven that open discussion and honest engagement can pave the way for compromise and consensus positions. The path to peace is often long and arduous, but the negotiation process is far from exhausted.

**Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA)**

*February 18, 2011*

“I commend the Obama Administration for vetoing the counter-productive resolution considered today by the UNSC. Today, the Administration made clear that the U.S. will not allow the U.N. to be turned into a forum to attack our ally, Israel.

“With today’s veto, the Administration made clear that the only path to a real, lasting peace in the region is through direct negotiations.

“As we watch developments in the Middle East with hope and concern, we stand with those who undertake constructive efforts that foster peace and bring greater stability to the region and our world.

“President Obama is to be commended for his leadership and his continuing commitment to peace in the Middle East.” *(Press Release)*

**Rep. Gary Peters (D-MI)**

*February 17, 2011*

“Since the beginning of the peace process, the issue of settlements has been one reserved for final status negotiations between the parties. The United States must stand by our ally Israel and use our veto power at the United Nations Security Council to make clear that the negotiating table is the only avenue to resolving the conflict, and that efforts to single Israel out for blame and criticism are unacceptable and unfounded.”

**Senator Rob Portman (R-OH)**

*February 17, 2011*

“We should stand strongly with our ally Israel, the only Democracy in the Middle East. After the United Nations’ latest anti-Israeli actions and at a time when Middle East tensions are high, it is more important than ever to remain committed to a strong Israel”

**Rep. Mike Quigley (D-IL)**

*February 17, 2011*

I write today regarding the expected consideration by the United Nations Security Council of a resolution condemning Israel on the issue of settlements. While I acknowledge the diversity of views on the issue of settlements, I feel that this U.N. resolution serves only to internationalize the conflict and move us farther away from a peace deal. Settlements are a final status issue that must be resolved through direct, bilateral negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians. The U.N. is not the appropriate forum in which to determine issues that need to be negotiated directly between the parties involved.

You recently expressed similar sentiments at your January 20 meeting with the Foreign Minister of Estonia, and I commend and appreciate you doing so. At the meeting, you stated:

We continue to believe strongly that the only way that there will be a resolution of the conflict and a two-state solution that will result in an independent, viable Palestinian state and security for Israel is through a negotiated settlement. Therefore, we don’t see action in the United Nations or any other forum as being helpful in bringing about that desired outcome. Our position on settlements remains as it has been . . . . Ultimately, the Palestinian and Israeli people have to make a decision about whether they can engage in negotiations that will result in compromise on both sides to obtain what we believe will be not just two states living side by side in peace and security, but a much better future for the children of both Israelis and Palestinians.

I urge you and the United States leadership to work to postpone the expected vote on the U.N. resolution condemning Israel for the settlements. Failing a postponement of the vote, I urge you to ensure the U.S. vetoes the resolution. The U.S. can and should play a leadership role in bringing the parties back to the table and helping to resolve this and other core issues. Encouraging the U.N. to allow the parties to negotiate directly rather than intervening is a key action the U.S. can take from its position of leadership.

The best forum for making progress toward peace is in direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians in order to achieve a two-state solution and security for both parties. With this in mind, I encourage you to ensure the U.S. works to postpone, or if needed veto, this harmful U.N. Security Council resolution condemning Israel for its settlements. (*Letter to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton*)

**Sen. Jim Risch (R-ID)**

*February 18, 2011*

I urge President Obama to instruct our Ambassador to the U.N. to object to any resolutions that single-out and condemn Israeli actions. The United Nations has routinely advocated anti-Israel and anti-Semitic hate. Israel and the Palestinians need to work out this issue without interference by the U.N. Only through direct bilateral negotiations, supported by all sides, will Israel and the Palestinians be able to find an agreement that allows them to live in peace and security

**Rep. Steve Rothman (D-NJ)**

*February 18, 2011*

I commend the Obama administration for using its first veto at the United Nations to do the right thing and block today's anti-Israel resolution. *(Press Release)*

*February 17, 2011*

America's support for Israel at the United Nations on the issues at hand is right on the merits and necessary for both America's and Israel's national security. The future boundaries of any two state solution must only be determined through direct talks between the Israelis and Palestinians and not at the U.N. Additionally, any failure to stand with Israel during these difficult times in the Middle East will only encourage the enemies of America and Israel. *(Press Release)*

**Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL)**

*February 18, 2011*

"I urge the Administration to veto the anticipated anti-Israel Security Council resolution, and I continue to support the President's efforts to facilitate negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians. As much as I support peaceful negotiations for the establishment of a Palestinian state, I do not support efforts by the Palestinians to bypass negotiations with Israel by appealing to the United Nations. Anti-Israel UN resolutions do nothing to further the cause of peace in the Middle East. Instead of pursuing such measures, I urge the Palestinians to return to the table for direct negotiations with Israel."

**Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY)**

*February 18, 2011*

“The United Nations is greatly overstepping its bounds. This matter should be handled through direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Any attempts by the international community to address this matter are counterproductive and not helpful to the goal of peace.”

**Sen. David Vitter (R-LA)**

*February 18, 2011*

It’s a critical time to maintain our allegiance with Israel – our strongest ally in the Middle East – and the United States must veto the resolution the Palestinians are proposing at the UN and dismiss the Administration’s alternative. *(Press Release)*

**Rep. Henry Waxman (D-CA)**

*February 18, 2011*

I want to commend President Obama for standing firm and ensuring a veto of the resolution before the U.N. Security Council on the settlements issue.

The US veto reaffirms that the only productive course ahead is for the Palestinian leadership to resume direct negotiations with Israel without preconditions.

*February 17, 2011*

Israeli leaders have time and again shown bold leadership to make difficult concessions on settlements and others issues for the sake of peace. The reality is that if the Palestinian Authority is serious about statehood they need to prove they too are willing to make tough decisions and enter negotiations without preconditions. Unilaterally taking issues from the negotiating table to the U.N. Security Council is not only a reckless and irresponsible tactic – it is wholly ineffective.

The peace process deserves far better from the United Nations. The Obama Administration has been working forcefully to prevent an anti-Israel resolution from being offered today at the U.N. Security Council. If these efforts do not succeed, the United States must stand ready to use its full voice and veto against a resolution that only threatens to intensify the peace process stalemate.

**Rep. Anthony Weiner (D-NY)**

*February 17, 2011*

“This is too clever by half. Instead of doing the correct and principled thing and vetoing an inappropriate and wrong resolution, they now have opened the door to more and more anti-Israeli efforts coming to the floor of the U.N. The correct venue for discussions about settlements and the other aspects of a peace plan is at the negotiating table. Period.”  
[\(Politico\)](#)