

MEMMO

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Unconstructive U.N. Resolutions

The Palestinian United Nations delegation put forward a resolution to the U.N. Security Council (UNSC) on Dec. 11 that sets back the chances for Israeli-Palestinian peace. The Palestinian resolution predetermines an outcome while ignoring key Israeli concerns. The United States should continue to press for the Palestinians to return to direct bilateral negotiations with Israel as the best path to ultimately achieve peace. The United States should oppose – and, if necessary, veto – any resolution that circumvents Israeli-Palestinian direct negotiations and imposes solutions.

The Palestinians have put forward a proposal to impose terms on Israel.

- The Palestinians introduced a UNSC resolution last week that would have the international community impose an unacceptable agreement on Israel.
- The one-sided resolution completely adopts Palestinian terms – including an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and parts of Jerusalem by the end of 2017 – irrespective of the security situation or Israeli claims.
- External measures such as this violate the fundamental principle of the Israeli-Palestinian Oslo Accords, in which both sides agreed to resolve final status issues bilaterally, through direct negotiations.



Instead of negotiating with Israel, PA President Abbas seeks to impose a solution through the U.N.

Direct bilateral talks are the only viable path for achieving an enduring solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

- A deal can only work if both parties enter it willingly, feel vested in it, and intend to implement it. Without buy-in from the two parties and the publics they represent, no accord will be viable.
- Outside of a negotiated settlement, international recognition of Palestinian rights at Israel's expense only encourages Palestinian obstinacy and refusal to return to the negotiating table.
- As President Barack Obama said during his March 2012 trip to Israel, "There is no question that the only path to peace is through negotiations – which is why ... the United States will oppose unilateral efforts to bypass negotiations through the United Nations. It has to be done by the parties."
- On April 2, U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Samantha Power reiterated this message. She stated that the U.S. opposes "any and all unilateral actions in the international arena, including on Palestinian statehood, that circumvent or prejudice the very outcomes that can only come about through a negotiated settlement."

- Israelis across the political spectrum oppose Palestinian attempts to bypass negotiations with Israel. Israeli MK Tzipi Livni said, “The Palestinian proposal is bad also in the opinion of those in Israel who want to reach a fair arrangement in the future and deeply disagree with Netanyahu over the course of diplomatic conduct.”
- On Oct. 21, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said, “Leaders on both sides must overcome their differences and dispense with the unilateral initiatives that serve only to fuel mistrust and polarization.”

To enhance the prospects for peace, the United States should remain committed to the principles that guided previous negotiations.

- Talks must be direct and bilateral.
- The U.S. must support and work closely with Israel.
- A solution cannot be imposed on the parties.
- Disagreements should be worked out privately.
- Both sides must be willing to make key compromises.
- The U.S. must encourage Arab nations to play a supporting role.

The United States should oppose – and, if necessary, veto – any Security Council resolution that seeks to impose a solution.

- The United States should reinforce long-standing American policy and veto any Security Council resolution that seeks to bypass direct negotiations and impose a solution on the parties.
- The United States must remind the Palestinians that the most viable path to peace is through bilateral negotiations – not through unilateral approaches to international bodies such as the U.N.