

MEMMO

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U.S. Must Urge Abbas to Advance Peace

President Donald Trump will visit Israel and the West Bank next week and is expected to seek a resumption of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. For decades, Israel has made clear its desire to negotiate peace and it continues to do so. America must urge the Palestinians to similarly commit to meaningful negotiations without preconditions, to end incitement to violence, and to seek a lasting resolution to the conflict that would lead to two states living in peace.

The Palestinians have repeatedly rejected Israel's peace overtures.

- In December 2000, Israel agreed to the establishment of a Palestinian state and Israeli withdrawal from 94 to 96 percent of the West Bank, with land swaps to compensate the Palestinians. The agreement, negotiated with the assistance of President Bill Clinton, was ultimately rejected by PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat.
- In September 2008, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert offered Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas a Palestinian state on 93.5 percent of the West Bank with land swaps. In a 2015 TV interview, President Abbas said that he “rejected [the offer] out of hand.”
- In 2014, President Obama proposed a negotiating framework for an agreement that Israel accepted, but President Abbas never responded. Instead, he effectively ended peace talks by signing a unity deal with Hamas.

Prime Minister Netanyahu continues to support direct talks.

- On May 7, Prime Minister Netanyahu spoke of President Trump's desire to renew peace talks, “I share this desire and the citizens of Israel share this desire; we want peace.”
- Last fall at the U.N., Prime Minister Netanyahu declared, “I am ready to negotiate all final status issues... I remain committed to a vision of peace based on two states for two peoples.”
- Israel is taking concrete steps to better Palestinian lives and foster an environment conducive to peace. It has signed numerous agreements with the PA to further those goals, including recent agreements on water, electricity, communications and more.

The United States must urge the Palestinian leadership to advance peace.

- President Trump should urge President Abbas to return to direct, bilateral talks with Israel without preconditions, and to cease efforts to achieve his objectives at the United Nations. A durable peace will require difficult concessions from both sides. This can only be achieved through direct negotiations between the parties.
 - America must encourage President Abbas to create a culture of peace. The Palestinian leadership must stop incentivizing violence through payments to terrorists and their families, and end incitement to violence against Israelis. They must stop teaching hate in schools and glorifying violence by naming public buildings, sporting events and children's summer camps after terrorists.
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