

Newsletter Wednesday December 19, 2018

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**US envoy Nikki Haley hints at 'new elements' in Mideast peace plan**

Outgoing ambassador to U.N. says yet-unpublished peace plan accepts that region has "changed in powerful and important ways," hinting that it may be favorable to Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria • EU: Only viable agreement based on 1967 borders.

Associated Press, Ariel Kahana and Israel Hayom Staff

U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley speaks during a Security Council meeting on the Middle East, Tuesday | Photo: Reuters

Outgoing U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley said on Tuesday that an American plan to broker peace between Israel and the Palestinians brings "brings new elements to the discussion, taking advantage of the new world of technology that we live in."

She hinted that the plan will include many features that will please both sides and some that they won't like.

Speaking at a U.N. Security Council meeting on the Middle East, Haley gave no details of exactly what would be included in the long-awaited, yet unpublished plan, which has been prepared by U.S. President Donald Trump's son-in-law and top adviser Jared Kushner.

"It is much longer. It contains much more thoughtful detail," Haley told the council of the plan, which she said she has read.

She added that "it recognizes that realities on the ground in the Middle East have changed in powerful and important ways," which may suggest that the plan will be favorable to the continued Jewish presence in Judea and Samaria.

In 2004, President George W. Bush used similar terminology, saying that "in light of new realities on the ground" it was "unrealistic" that Israel would have to fully withdraw to the borders that existed before the 1967 Six-Day War.

The Palestinians are skeptical and have accused the Trump administration of siding with Israel on the core issues relating to the decades-old conflict. They have refused to participate in the U.S. effort since December 2017, when Trump officially recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital and relocated the U.S. embassy there.

But Haley told the U.N. Security Council that "both sides would benefit greatly from a peace agreement, but the Palestinians would benefit more, and the Israelis would risk more."

"The Palestinians have everything to gain by engaging in peace negotiations," Haley said. "This plan will be different from all previous ones. The critical question is whether the response to it will be any different."

She also accused Arab countries of not making the Palestinian people a priority: "Because if they were, you would all be in a room helping bring both sides to the table."

Haley, who is stepping down at the end of the month, said moving forward to negotiations and peace "will need leaders with real vision to do it." She declared: "The world will be watching."

Immediately preceding the meeting, eight European Union members stood outside the Security Council chamber and read a joint statement emphasizing the EU's "strong and continued commitment" to the internationally agreed requirements for Israeli-Palestinian peace – an apparent message to the Trump administration.

"The EU is truly convinced that the achievement of a two-state solution based on the 1967 borders with Jerusalem as the capital of both states, that meets Israeli and Palestinian security needs, and Palestinian aspirations for statehood and sovereignty, ends the occupation and resolves all final status issues ... is the only viable and realistic way to end the conflict and achieve just and lasting peace," the statement said.

Haley made no mention of any of these issues in her last speech at the council's monthly Mideast meeting, stressing instead the "unshakable bond" between the United States and Israel, which she has reflected in her nearly two years as U.S. ambassador.

"Given my record, some might mistakenly conclude that I am unsympathetic to the Palestinian people," she said. "Nothing could be further from the truth."

Haley said neither Israelis nor Palestinians should make peace at "any price" but she highlighted the differences between the two sides. "Israel wants a peace agreement but it does not need one," she said.

On the other hand, Haley said, the Palestinian people "are suffering terribly, while their leadership clings to 50-year-old demands that have only become less and less realistic," and a peace agreement holds the prospects "of a massive improvement in the quality of their lives and far greater control over their political future."

She said "it is with this backdrop in mind that the Trump administration has crafted its plan for peace between Israel and the Palestinians."

Israel's U.N. Ambassador Danny Danon said late last month that U.S. officials have told Israel's government they expect to release the long-awaited Israeli-Palestinian peace plan in the beginning of 2019.

Trump has dubbed the plan the "Deal of the Century."

Nickolay Mladenov, the U.N. Middle East envoy, told the council he "remains concerned by the weakening of international consensus and the absence of collective efforts to achieve an end to the occupation and the realization of a negotiated two-state resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."

"At the end of 2018, we are nowhere closer to reviving efforts for a negotiated solution," he said. "Without a political horizon, all our collective and individual efforts merely contribute to managing the conflict rather than resolving it."

Newsletter Tuesday December 18, 2018

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Netanyahu backs bill to deport families of West Bank terrorists

PM Netanyahu tells Likud faction he is satisfied the bill meets legal criteria, despite attorney general's concerns that it is problematic legally and in terms of international reaction • Bill co-sponsor MK Moti Yogevev slams "castration" of deterrence.

Yair Altman, Ariel Kahana and Israel Hayom Staff

Bill co-sponsors Habayit Hayehudi leader Naftali Bennett and Habayit Hayehudi MK Moti Yogevev | Photo: Oren Ben Hakoon

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday voiced his support for the first time for a bill authorizing the government to order the expulsion of families of West Bank terrorists. His support comes despite reservations expressed by Attorney General Avichai Mendelblit.

The bill, co-sponsored by Habayit Hayehudi leader Naftali Bennett and Habayit Hayehudi MK Moti Yogevev, calls for the expulsion of terrorists' families, saying this "is a proven deterrent that has the power to decrease terrorist attacks and save lives."

It would give the GOC Central Command the authority to relocate a terrorist's family from their home in the West Bank to another area within a week of the attack.

Speaking at a meeting of his Likud faction, Netanyahu said he was satisfied that the bill met all legal criteria, despite the opinions of some legal scholars that it did not.

Mendelblit is a vigorous opponent of both that bill and another bill passed by the Ministerial Committee on Legislation, known as the "young settlements bill."

Deputy Attorney General Ran Nazri told committee members on Monday that both bills were problematic from a constitutional point of view and in terms of the potential international reaction.

"This is a serious blow to the freedom and property of the families destined to be deported, because of an act by a single family member without proof that they themselves are dangerous," Nazri said.

Yogev slammed Nazri's opinion.

"Castrating the tools of deterrence through legal tools might defend Israel on the international front, but puts the lives of its citizens and soldiers at risk," Yogev said.

On Monday, Bennett visited the Givat Asaf outpost, the site of a lethal terrorist shooting last week. Bennett said he would promote the bill despite Mendelblit's objections.

"Today, it pays for terrorists to kill Jews – they get an 'exit' of tens of thousands of shekels [in stipends paid by the Palestinian Authority], and at most their home might be demolished. It's a great package deal.

"That's what we want to change, to make it not worth the terrorists' while. That is what we are fighting for. I hear that there is a desire to stall the bill in the legislative process, but we will promote it," Bennett said.