Michael Oren: Trump Decision Advances Peace

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US President Donald T[rump’s administration’s decision Tuesday to close the Palestine Liberation Organization’s](https://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Trump-broadens-pressure-on-PA-closing-its-DC-offices-566927) mission in Washington will help bring about peace between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, said Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister’s Office Michael Oren (Kulanu), a former ambassador to the United States.

Oren said Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and his people have grown accustomed over the years to violating agreements freely without consequences. For example, he said, there is an article in the Oslo Accords that forbids them to act in order to recognize a Palestinian state outside negotiations with Israel.

“With the closing of the PLO office in Washington, the American administration is not changing the rules of the game, but simply restoring them after years of neglect,” Oren said. “It should be noted that in contrast to previous administrations that would reward the Palestinians for abandoning the negotiations with Israel, President Trump is forcing the Palestinians to pay a price. As we have seen in the past – giving gifts to the Palestinians only keeps them away from the peace talks, and now the Americans are punishing them in order to make them return to the table.”

Knesset Speaker Yuli Edelstein (Likud) said the PLO mission was not used for advancing peace but for spreading hatred and incitement. His Likud colleague, Social Equality Minister Gila Gamliel said Abbas’s efforts to isolate Israel prove that he is the problem and not the solution.

Agriculture Minister Uri Ariel (Bayit Yehudi) called the decision a “New Year’s gift” to Israel and the Jewish people.

But Joint List MK Ahmad Tibi called the decision “an act of revenge against the Palestinian people” by Trump, who was also condemned by Meretz leader Tamar Zandberg.

“Trump must be told the truth, which is that punishing the Palestinians harms Israel’s interests and could cause our security situation to deteriorate,” Zandberg said. “Bibi, [Yisrael Beytenu leader Avigdor] Liberman, and [Bayit Yehudi leader Naftali] Bennett might be exulting tonight, but if anyone in the US administration thinks this is a gift to Israel, it is actually poison.”