House Committee Seeking Answers from Kerry on Anti-Israel U.N. Resolution

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The Obama administration has one week to hand over all documents involving a United Nations resolution critical of Israel to a congressional committee, amid allegations from Israeli officials that the administration worked behind the scenes to pass the resolution.

A Monday letter to Secretary of State John Kerry from the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform requests that Kerry provide all communications related to the December U.N. resolution, which describes the West Bank and east Jerusalem as occupied Palestinian territory and declares Israeli construction there illegal. The administration abstained from voting on the resolution, allowing its passage.

"Recent press reports raise questions whether the United States secretly played a role in organizing, advancing, or supporting this resolution," [read](https://oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/2017-01-09-JEC-DeSantis-to-Kerry-DOS-Abstention-on-UN-Resolution-due-1-17.pdf) the letter. "To help the Committee understand why the U.S. allowed Resolution 2234 to pass and so we can assess the facts and circumstances related to U.S. involvement in the vote, please provide all documents and communications referring to relating to Resolution 2334 as soon as possible, but no later than 5:00 pm on January 17, 2017."

Israeli officials have [alleged](http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2016/12/26/israel-accuses-obama-administration-helping-craft-push-un-censure.html) that the administration worked secretly to draft and push the resolution through, a charge U.S. officials have denied.

"That kind of hyperbole, those kinds of statements, don't have a basis in fact," President Obama [said](http://www.timesofisrael.com/obama-in-israel-tv-interview-dismisses-idea-he-betrayed-israel-at-un/) during an Israeli television interview Monday. "They may play well with Bibi's political base, as well as the Republican base here in the United States, but they don't match up with the facts."

Oversight Committee Chairman Jason Chaffetz told THE WEEKLY STANDARD he is determined to get answers from the administration in its waning days.

"I'm trying to get some answers before they walk out the door," he said. "I'm sure everybody is dusting off their resumes and packing up boxes, but we still have a lot of questions."

Chaffetz said he would continue probing regardless of whether the administration responds to the inquiry.

"Usually I get the straight arm from the administration, but I'm going to keep trying. It's still my role and responsibility to do that," he said.

The House letter, in addition to requesting documents, describes the administration's abstention as a divergence from U.S. policy toward Israel at the United Nations.

"The decision to allow this resolution to pass represents a significant change in U.S. policy," the letter read. "The U.S. has traditionally opposed UN resolutions condemning Israel, most recently on February 18, 2011, when the United States vetoed a draft resolution with similar content."

The administration's abstention from the resolution, which passed 14 to 0, drew fire from Republicans and Democrats in both chambers of Congress.

"The administration made a grievous mistake on not vetoing the one-sided, unfair resolution, which is biased against Israel," Democratic congressman Eliot Engel [told](http://www.weeklystandard.com/a-bipartisan-repudiation-of-president-obama/article/2006147) TWS Thursday. "The United Nations excludes itself from being any kind of a fair mediator because it is so biased against Israel, each and every step of the way."

Engel's remarks came ahead the passage, 342 to 80, of a House measure condemning the U.N. resolution. The Senate is working to pass a parallel version of the measure, introduced by Maryland senator Ben Cardin and Florida senator Marco Rubio.