Netanyahu Calls for Friendly Countries to Change UN Voting Pattern on Israel

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Israel will begin asking countries with whom it has friendly ties and who want Israeli cooperation to change their anti-Israel voting patterns at the UN, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Monday after speaking with numerous heads of state at the climate conference in the French capital.

Netanyahu, speaking to Israeli reporters following a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin and before beginning a meeting with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, said leaders from around the world – including Arab states – approached him to talk about counter-terrorism and technological issues.

The time has come for the friendship and cooperation of these countries to come out in votes in international institutions, Netanyahu said, without naming which countries he had in mind. “You will hear this [demand] more and more – this is our natural expectation.

“Israel’s standing in the word is very firm,” Netanyahu said.

“People are looking to get close to us. They understand that Israel is a big regional power, and also a world power in cyber technology and there is hardly anyone who didn’t talk to me about that. They also understand that we can help in the war against terrorism and radical Islam.”

Netanyahu stressed the importance of his 45-minute conversation with Putin, saying it was “deep and wide” and got into “the details.”

He said Putin discussed the recent incident with Turkey, in which one of Russia’s planes was shot down, as well as shared information. He added that there is a “special relationship” with Russia that serves both countries’ interests.

It is not hard to imagine how difficult the situation would be were Israel in a confrontational relationship with Moscow, he said.

“The events of recent days prove the importance of our coordination, or deconfliction mechanism, our attempts to cooperate with each other to prevent unnecessary accidents and tragedies,” Netanyahu said at the opening of his meeting with Putin.

Russia’s leader, in his comments, said Moscow was satisfied with the bilateral ties with Israel, stating that the mechanism worked out between the two countries “has been efficient.”

Netanyahu, meanwhile, told reporters that as a result of the mechanism, Israel’s freedom of action over Syria has not been curtailed by Russia’s engagement there.

Furthermore, he said he made clear during his discussions on Monday that Israel does not want to see a defeat of Islamic State in Syria that will result in it being controlled by Iran.

Netanyahu also met during for some 10 minutes with US President Barack Obama, telling him that Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas must stop the incitement that is giving fuel to the current wave of terrorism.

According to the prime minister, Obama said he would take it up with Abbas.

Netanyahu and Abbas shook hands and greeted each other briefly during the “family picture” of the nearly 150 leaders gathered at the conference.

The prime minister said this was only “protocol,” and that he did not read any significance into it, adding that Abbas was placed near him in the positioning for the photograph, separated only by New Zealand’s prime minister.

In his brief five-minute address to the conference focused on climate change, Netanyahu first called for Abbas to end the incitement, and then went on to talk about Israel’s technological breakthroughs on water and energy issues.

Netanyahu said the leaders he spoke with did not have any illusions about reaching an Israeli-Palestinian agreement at this time, but that they did not want to limit their ties to Israel.

Netanyahu clearly differentiated between the “EU bureaucracy in Brussels” – with which he has thrown down a challenge by freezing cooperation with them on the diplomatic process as a result of the settlement-labeling issue – and individual countries with whom Israel continues to have strong ties, such as Germany, Britain, Italy and Greece.

One diplomatic official said the Greek foreign minister recently wrote Netanyahu to distance his country from the settlement-labeling issue.

Even the prime ministers of Iceland and Ireland, two European countries very critical of Israel, approached him during the day, Netanyahu said, adding that he took the opportunity to meet separately for the first time with the new prime ministers of Canada and Australia, Justin Trudeau and Malcolm Turnbull, respectively.

Israel enjoys very close ties with both countries, and Netanyahu invited both men to the country for an official visit.

Netanyahu, who has spoken to Trudeau on the phone previously, said Israel and Canada enjoy “terrific relations,” and that there is room to make them even stronger. Trudeau, according to the Prime Minister’s Office, said he expects the “close relationship” Canada has had with Israel over the generations to continue.

The prime minister’s aides called a meeting with Japan’s Shinzo Abe “warm and friendly,” and said the Japanese premier expressed an interest in furthering economic cooperation, as well as cooperation in the fields of cyber security and counter-terrorism.

Netanyahu also met separately with French President Francois Hollande, with the two discussing how they could coordinate on counter-terrorism issues. He also, according to his spokesman, discussed Israel’s interests “on [Israel’s] northern front” with the French leader.

Netanyahu will return to Israel Tuesday morning, some 24 hours after he left for Paris, accompanied by his wife Sara.