Palestinians Bring Draft Anti-Settlement Resolution to UN, Lobby Obama

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By Herb Keinon

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A Palestinian delegation is in Washington lobbying the Obama administration against using its veto to scuttle an anti-settlement resolution the Palestinian Authority wants to bring to the UN Security Council before President-elect Donald Trump takes office on January 20.

The resolution, a draft of which was seen by The Jerusalem Post, is similar to an anti-settlement resolution that outgoing President Barack Obama vetoed in 2011. It reaffirms that “all Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including east Jerusalem, are illegal under international law and constitute a major obstacle to the achievement of peace on the basis of the two-state solution.”

The draft says that continuing settlement activities “are dangerously imperiling the viability of the two-state solution based on the 1967 borders [sic],” and says that the cessation of all settlement activity “is essential for salvaging” the two-state solution.

Israeli Ambassador to the UN Danny Danon told the Post that if such a resolution is passed, it will reinforce the Palestinians’ belief that they can get more by going to the international community and bypassing Israel than by dealing directly with Jerusalem. It will also encourage them, he said, to move forward on this track, and would lead them to the next step, which is to demand sanctions on Israel for violating Security Council resolutions.

The US, Danon said, has made clear that it will veto one-sided, unbalanced anti-Israel resolutions, although the question of what constitutes an unbalanced resolution is open to interpretation.

The Palestinian draft is not the only one circulating among delegations at the UN. New Zealand – which is set to finish its two-year rotating stint on the Security Council at the end of the month – is circulating a draft resolution of its own.

This draft, also seen by the Post, declares that the two-state solution is the “only way to achieve an enduring peace that meets Israeli security needs and Palestinian aspirations for statehood and sovereignty, ends the occupation that began in 1967 and resolves all permanent status issues.”

This resolution calls for a “firm timetable” for an early return to negotiations, and for refraining from setting “preconditions for the resumption” of talks. Likewise, it calls for a “cessation of Israeli settlement activity” as well as “active and sustained Palestinian leadership to deter incitement to violence against Israeli civilians.”

Regarding terrorism, the New Zealand draft calls for “an end to all acts of terrorism being perpetrated against both Israeli and Palestinian civilians.”

It also calls for “an end to hostile actions and rocket fire from Gaza.”

Likewise, it calls for both parties to refrain from “questioning the integrity or commitment of the other party or its leaders.”

Danon said Israel’s position was that in general, resolutions would not help move the sides forward.

“New Zealand is leaving the Security Council and they have a desire to do something,” Danon said. “I told them that we will remain here with the Palestinians after December, and that it is important that everything that is done be constructive and not give the Palestinians encouragement to go to the international community rather than talk to us.”

Danon is in Israel escorting a delegation of 14 UN ambassadors on a mission organized by the American Jewish Committee’s Project Interchange.