

Outgoing U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry Says Israeli Settlements Destroy Hopes for Peace



Washington, December 29 (RHC)-- U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry defended the United States' decision to abstain -- and not veto -- a UN resolution condemning Israeli settlements in occupied Palestinian territories, saying Israel's policies put the so-called two-state solution "in serious jeopardy."

Speaking days after a historic measure by the UN Security Council against the settlements, Kerry said that the status quo was leading to a "perpetual occupation" of Palestinian lands which in turn would "destroy hopes for peace on both sides."

"The two-state solution is the only way to achieve a just and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians," Kerry said as he laid out President Barack Obama's vision of the Middle East before a group of diplomats in Washington.

“Today, there are a similar number of Jews and Palestinians living between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea,” the top US diplomat continued. “They have a choice. They can choose to live together in one state, or they can separate into two states.”

Last week, the UN Security Council voted 14-0 to pass Resolution 2334, which demanded an immediate end to Israel’s “illegal” settlement activities in occupied Palestinian territories.

The unanimous vote was made possible after the U.S. broke away from its tradition of vetoing anti-Israeli measures and allowed the resolution to pass by abstaining from the vote.

The decision angered Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who accused Obama and Kerry of being behind the “shameful” act. The Israeli envoy to the United States, Ron Dermer, pushed the envelope even further, saying on Monday that Tel Aviv was in possession of “ironclad” evidence that showed Obama planned the “gang-up.”

Kerry said in his speech that Netanyahu’s “current coalition is the most right-wing in Israeli history, with an agenda driven by the most extreme elements.” Kerry also rejected Tel Aviv’s claims of U.S. collusion with other Security Council members and Palestinian officials, saying the decision to abstain from the vote was “in accordance with our values.”

However, he said the Obama administration, like all the administrations before it, has been fully committed to Israel’s security. “No American administration has done more for Israel’s security than Barack Obama’s,” Kerry said. “The Israeli prime minister himself has noted our unprecedented military and intelligence cooperation.”

Ahead of Kerry’s speech, President-elect Donald Trump harshly criticized the Obama administration for allowing the resolution to pass and urged Israel to “stay strong” until January 20 when he takes office.

Netanyahu, who is reportedly preparing to deliver a rebuttal to Kerry’s speech on Wednesday afternoon, responded with a tweet thanking Trump for his “clear-cut support for Israel.” The Israeli prime minister and Trump have both said they would ignore the new UN resolution.

Relations between the Obama administration and Netanyahu reached a particularly low point last year as the Israeli premier lobbied members of Congress to undermine a historic nuclear agreement reached between Iran and the P5+1 group of countries.

<https://www.radiohc.cu/index.php/en/noticias/internacionales/117042-outgoing-us-secretary-of-state-john-kerry-says-israeli-settlements-destroy-hopes-for-peace>



Radio Habana Cuba