Pompeo: U.S. blocked $165m in funding due to Palestinian incitement

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<https://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Pompeo-calls-Mideast-peace-plan-truly-historic-569133>

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo teased the [Trump administration's upcoming peace plan](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwikmufAlv3dAhVOJBoKHdrtDnwQqOcBMAB6BAgAEAM&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.jpost.com%2FArab-Israeli-Conflict%2FUS-Peace-plan-will-not-propose-Palestinian-confederation-with-Jordan-568933&usg=AOvVaw20FMj4aGQtC7TbAxFCiYIP) on Wednesday as a "truly historic" effort to broker an agreement between Israelis and Palestinians, accepting an award from the Jewish Institute for National Security of America in Washington.  
  
Speaking at the Grand Hyatt downtown, with senators and diplomats in the audience, the secretary hinted at a plan that would offer the Palestinians a state – a word only recently introduced into US President Donald Trump's lexicon, when he [endorsed a two-state solution](https://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Trump-backs-two-state-solution-I-think-thats-what-works-best-568062) to the storied conflict last month.

"We are making a truly historic push for peace between Israel and the Palestinians," Pompeo told the crowd. The peace plan– designed by Jared Kushner, the president's son-in-law, and Jason Greenblatt, his special representative for international negotiations, over the course of nearly two years– will be released "before too terribly long, and we are hopeful that both sides will have constructive conversations to lead to that."  
  
"We are very hopeful that one day the Palestinian people will have the same kinds of things, the same material, the same opportunities that the people of Israel have," said Pompeo. " A real economy, a real governance, all the things that we want for every citizen of the world."  
  
"We very much want you to have a space," he added.  
  
But Pompeo also announced to the crowd that he had denied a $165 million transfer of aid to the Palestinian Authority earlier in the day, over its failure to adhere to the Taylor Force Act, a law that bars the State Department from continuing aid to the PA unrelated to security cooperation [unless Ramallah ceases its practice](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwicurr7lv3dAhUPUhoKHczSARYQFjAAegQIBBAB&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.jpost.com%2FIsrael-News%2FWhite-House-sends-warning-shot-to-Palestinians-over-pay-for-slay-567664&usg=AOvVaw3z1nWdXsqurKtDuFMfcsdn) of compensating the families of convicted murderers and terrorists.

"I signed an order today denying $165 million to the Palestinian Authority under the Taylor Force Act because of their funding of terror," Pompeo said to applause, questioning whether Israel would have a partner at the negotiating table going forward, and comparing Hamas and the PA in unflattering terms.  
  
Much of his comments on Middle East peace came in a question-and-answer session, but his prepared remarks focused on the president's ["maximum pressure" campaign on the Iranian government](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=3&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjQgejjl_3dAhWq4YUKHUhnB2QQFjACegQIBRAB&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.jpost.com%2FMiddle-East%2FUN-Security-Council-led-by-Trump-meeting-to-reduce-pressure-on-Iran-566908&usg=AOvVaw0XEB9J_bDEmS9BLmiUmVuZ).  
  
"For the previous eight years, we had an administration that had more respect for the leaders of Iran than it did for the State of Israel," Pompeo said.  
  
He said that the administration was introducing a new condition in Geneva-based talks on the settlement of Syria's seven year-old civil war: the removal of all Iranian and Iranian-backed forces from Syria.  
  
"The onus of expelling Iran from Syria is on the Syrian regime," Pompeo said. Without this condition met, he continued, "it will not receive one single dollar from the United States for reconstruction."  
  
Pompeo listed among the administration's accomplishments its fight against "antisemitism" at the UN, including in the Human Rights Council.  
  
The secretary also said he had spoken with Netanyahu earlier in the day, although he did not specify the topics that were discussed.  
  
"In the entire Middle East, there is only one consistently pro-American, free-enterprise, democratic nation; it’s the people of the State of Israel," stressed Pompeo.  
  
In the audience was Israel's ambassador to Washington Ron Dermer, who sat at the same dinner table as Yousef Al Otaiba, the US envoy for the United Arab Emirates. The two are said to have a strong personal relationship despite their nations maintaining no formal ties.