Palestinians Preparing New Security Council Draft – Report

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The Palestinian delegation to the United Nations has reportedly circulated a new draft of a resolution condemning Israel settlements that they hope to bring to a vote before US President Barack Obama leaves office next month.

The draft is reportedly softer than one circulated earlier in the year, but still calls all the settlements, including Jewish neighborhoods in East Jerusalem, illegal, Israel Radio reported, noting that Egypt would submit the text for the Palestinians.

The Palestinians pushed for the Security Council to adopt a resolution against settlements in February 2011 but it was vetoed by the United States. The 14 other Security Council members voted in favor of the resolution, reflecting the wide support for the draft which had over 100 co-sponsors.

Palestinians have said that the new resolution would draw from the 2011 text.

There was speculation that Obama would not veto the new resolution, however, the chances of that are thought to have gone down significantly since the election of Donald Trump to succeed him on January 20.

Following a meeting in Washington on Tuesday between a Palestinian delegation and US Secretary of State John Kerry, State Department spokesman John Kirby said that as regards any potential UN action relating to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, “nothing’s changed about our view on that.”

Longstanding US policy has been for years that any resolution to the conflict should come from direct negotiations between the parties and not be imposed from the outside.

However, speaking to the Saban Forum in Washington earlier this month, Kerry did not completely rule out the possibility that the US would support a move at the United Nations.

On Wednesday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu Netanyahu said Israel remains concerned that Washington could back a Palestine-related resolution at the Security Council before January 20. “With every passing day that possibility becomes less likely, but until then it’s still there,” Netanyahu said.