Right-wing Lawmakers Back Livni for Possible UN Appointment

February 12, 2017

The Times of Israel

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/right-wing-lawmakers-back-livni-for-possible-un-appointment/>

Two lawmakers from the right-wing Jewish Home party endorsed opposition MK Tzipi Livni on Sunday for the post of deputy secretary-general of the United Nations.

According to the Haaretz daily, Livni, who now heads the Hatnua Party and is number two on the Zionist Union faction in the Knesset, was asked to join the world body by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres in a phone call over the weekend.

Her appointment would have to be approved by the UN Security Council.

“It is a great idea for Tzipi Livni to have a senior position in the United Nations,” Jewish Home MK Betzalel Smotrich, who frequently butts heads with Livni in the Knesset, wrote on Twitter. “As a patriotic Zionist with experience, I am certain that she would do fantastic work.”

Smotrich said the appointment should not be a partisan issue. “Enough with the automatic cataloging of right and left,” he tweeted.

Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked agreed with Smotrich, retweeting his post with the comment, “He’s right.”

Israel’s UN ambassador Danny Danon said he would welcome the nomination. “It would be an honor and a great service to the State of Israel,” he tweeted.

The offer comes amid a row at the UN over the proposal to name former Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Salam Fayyad the organization’s envoy on the Libya conflict.

The US blocked the appointment in a move hailed by Danon. Israel and the US reportedly fear the appointment of Fayyad, a former World Bank economist, is meant as a further signal of recognition for Palestinian statehood. The UN General Assembly voted to recognize a Palestinian state in 2012, granting Palestine the status of non-member observer state.

According to Haaretz, the offer to appoint Livni is meant as a quid pro quo, in exchange for the US allowing Fayyad’s appointment through. It would mark the highest ever position attained by any Israeli at the UN.

Former prime minister Ehud Barak tweeted that “Tzipi Livni at the UN would simply be good for everyone. Both influence and honor for Israel.”

“Who could be against it?” he wrote, “what do we care if Fayyad is sent to Libya?”

Netanyahu on Sunday hailed the US veto of Fayyad, saying the world body failed to give equal consideration to Israelis.

“I was informed of the possibility of the appointment of Salaam Fayyad to a UN position,” he said at Israel’s weekly cabinet meeting.

“I said that the time has come for reciprocity in the UN’s relations with Israel and free gifts cannot be constantly given to the Palestinian side,” Netanyahu said.

“The time has come for positions and appointments to be made to the Israeli side as well,” he said, quoted in a statement issued by the prime minister’s office.