Netanyahu to Africa Envoys: Changing UN Voting Patterns is Top Diplomatic Goal

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Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told a gathering of Israel’s envoys to Africa that his top diplomatic goal is to end African countries’ “automatic” votes against the Jewish state at the United Nations.

“Africa is as high as it has ever been in the pyramid of our foreign policy interests, except perhaps in the 1960s,” Netanyahu said. “The first interest is to dramatically change the situation regarding African votes at the U.N. and other international bodies from opposition to support.”

Netanyahu told the Israeli diplomats that his top goal is to “change their voting patterns given that the automatic majority against Israel at the U.N. is composed—first and foremost—of Arab countries. There are 54 countries [in Africa]. If you change the voting pattern of a majority of them, you at once bring them from one side to the other. We want to erode the opposition and change it to support.”

“While there are many other goals, it outweighs them all,” the prime minister said, adding that “the day is not far off when we will have a majority” of support in the U.N.

During the last year, improving relations with Africa has been one of Netanyahu’s top foreign policy priorities. He visited four East African nations last summer, and has met with dozens of African leaders at the United Nations as well as at a three-day conference on agriculture in December. Netanyahu was also invited by Togo to attend a major African summit later this year.