**U.N.’s anti-Israel vote fuels Republican calls to defund world body**

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The resolution condemning Israeli settlements in the West Bank could be the most expensive vote ever taken at the [United Nations](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/united-nations/).

The [Obama administration](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/barack-obama/) ignited an uproar on the right Friday after refusing to veto Resolution 2234, sending U.S.-Israeli relations into a tailspin and fueling calls from key Republicans and conservative leaders to strike back by pulling U.S. funding.

House Speaker Paul D. Ryan vowed to “reverse the damage done” to the U.S.-[Israel](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/israel/) alliance, while Republican Sens. Ted Cruz of Texas and Lindsey Graham of South Carolina have called for stripping funding from the [U.N.](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/united-nations/) until the resolution is repealed.

“Twenty-two percent of the [United Nations](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/united-nations/) budget comes from the American taxpayer, and I’m going to lead the charge to withhold funding until they repeal this resolution,” Mr. Graham, South Carolina Republican, told CNN.

Adding to the furor are top Israeli officials who say they have “clear” and “ironclad” evidence that the [Obama administration](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/barack-obama/) orchestrated the resolution behind the scenes, which [White House](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/white-house/) officials have denied.

Ron Dermer, Israeli ambassador to the U.S., said Monday he was interested in working with the incoming Trump administration and Congress on the defunding issue, saying, “I think there’s a lot of changes that can happen at the [United Nations](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/united-nations/).”

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ordered curtailed relations Tuesday with a dozen of the nations that voted in favor of the resolution.

“We look forward to discussing that with the new administration and with Congress, and we think there has to be a real pushback against the [U.N.](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/united-nations/), which has become a cesspool not just for anti-[Israel](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/israel/) activity but anti-American activity,” Mr. Dermer told Fox News.

President-elect Donald Trump has criticized the [Obama administration](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/barack-obama/)’s failure to veto the resolution, as has John R. Bolton, a former U.S. ambassador to the [U.N.](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/united-nations/) and a member of the Trump transition team who has called for using the power of the purse as leverage to repeal the resolution.

“Personally, what I would recommend to the president-elect is once he takes office, he should say this resolution is illegitimate and the United States is going to seek to repeal it,” Mr. Bolton told Fox News. “If that fails, and that’s the most likely outcome, we should cut our contributions to the [United Nations](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/united-nations/) perhaps in toto until this resolution is repealed.”

Mr. Bolton, on the short list for State Department deputy secretary, also called for “consequences” for the 14 nations that voted in favor of the resolution, which include Britain.

“It’s just extremely distressing that even Great Britain didn’t abstain on this resolution, and it shows just how much difficulty there is in the [United Nations](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/united-nations/) to try and carry out a coherent American foreign policy,” Mr. Bolton said.

Efforts to defund or withdraw from the [U.N.](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/united-nations/) crop up every few years, but the latest outcry hits at a perilous time for the organization, coming amid a recent international backlash against global institutions such as the European Union.

Another difference is that the president-elect has joined the [U.N.](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/united-nations/) criticism, promising after the vote on Twitter that “things will be different” in his administration.

“The [United Nations](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/united-nations/) has such great potential but right now it is just a club for people to get together, talk and have a good time. So sad!” Mr. Trump said in a Monday tweet.

Mr. Cruz launched a petition Tuesday entitled, “No U.S. funds for the [U.N.](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/united-nations/) until the vote on [Israel](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/israel/) is reversed.”

“I look forward to working with Sen. Graham, and with the incoming Administration of President-elect Trump, to significantly reduce or even eliminate U.S. funding of the [United Nations](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/united-nations/), and also to seriously reconsider financial support for the nations that supported this resolution,” said Mr. Cruz in a statement.

“For those who have put your name to this despicable attack on [Israel](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/israel/), you did so with full knowledge of the consequences of your actions,” said Mr. Cruz.

Conservative pundits went even further. “Destroy the [United Nations](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/united-nations/),” said a Tuesday headline in Resurgent. Fox News analyst Charles Krauthammer recommended that Mr. Trump raze the [U.N.](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/united-nations/)’s New York headquarters, “put his name on it and turn it into condos.”

“We ought to get jackhammers, and we ought to jackhammer the whole thing and float it into the East River,” former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee said on Fox News.

Other Republicans saved at least some of their scorn for Mr. Obama. Rep. Tom Cole, Oklahoma Republican, said Tuesday that he was surprised by the “pettiness” in the move.

“I think this was a last insult on the way out the door,” he said on MSNBC’s “Morning Joe.” “To do something that you know is deliberately at odds with what the incoming president is going to do on a stage this big, I think shows a certain pettiness that I’m surprised to see in President Obama.”

Frustration with the [U.N.](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/united-nations/) has built for years over the international body’s frequent targeting of [Israel](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/israel/). In 2016 the U.N. General Assembly approved 20 anti-[Israel](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/israel/) resolutions, as opposed to one each against Syria, North Korea, Crimea and Iran, according to the Simon Wiesenthal Center.

In its annual anti-Semitism report, the center placed the [Obama administration](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/barack-obama/)’s Friday abstention at the head of its list, the “Top 10 Worst Global Anti-Semitic/Anti-[Israel](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/israel/) Incidents,” calling it “the most stunning” attack on the Jewish state.

“It reversed decades-long US policy of vetoing such diplomatic moves against the Jewish State,” the center said.

Even Samantha Power, U.S. ambassador to the [U.N.](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/united-nations/), criticized the international body over [Israel](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/israel/) being “treated differently” than other member nations, saying in her Friday statement that the Security Council “too often continues to be biased against [Israel](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/israel/).”

“But it is because this resolution reflects the facts on the ground — and is consistent with U.S. policy across Republican and Democratic administration throughout the history of the State of Israel — that the United States did not veto it,” said Ms. Power.

The harshly worded resolution demands that [Israel](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/israel/) cease building settlements in “occupied Palestinian territory and east Jerusalem.”

Said Weekly Standard editor Bill Kristol on Twitter: “Resolution 2334 was intended to help in the delegitimization of [Israel](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/israel/). It could instead be a key moment in the delegitimization of the [UN](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/united-nations/).”

Democrats were split on the resolution. Sen. Dianne Feinstein, California Democrat, said the [Obama administration](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/barack-obama/)’s move “sends a strong message that the United States still supports a two-state solution.”

“Ending settlement activity in the West Bank and East Jerusalem is an absolute necessity if we’re ever to achieve a lasting peace between [Israel](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/israel/) and the Palestinians,” she said in a statement.

But at least a dozen Democrats broke with the [White House](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/white-house/) and blasted the decision to let the resolution pass.

“It’s singling out [Israel](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/israel/) when the [United Nations](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/united-nations/) is made up of nations of tyrants that have no democracy. It’s just hypocritical,” Rep. Eliot L. Engel, New York Democrat, told MSNBC. “And if the United States goes along with it, then what kind of body is the [United Nations](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/united-nations/)? Why should [Israel](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/israel/) care about anything the [United Nations](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/united-nations/) says when it can’t get a fair shake.”