**Readout of President Donald J. Trump’s Meeting with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel**

January 25, 2018

By President Donald Trump

White House

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PRESIDENT TRUMP:  Thank you very much.  It’s great to be with Prime Minister Netanyahu.  We’ve developed a great relationship, both as countries where I think it’s never been stronger — and I can honestly say that — and also, as personal friends.

We have discussions going with Israel on many things, including trade.  But the big move and something that was very historic and very important was the fact that we will be moving our embassy, as you know, to Jerusalem.  And as we also know, that is way ahead of schedule, by years, and we anticipate having a small version of it opened sometime next year.  So that’s a long time ahead of schedule.

It’s an honor, and it’s great honor to be with you.  Thank you very much.

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU:  Thank you.  Mr. President, Donald — thank you.

PRESIDENT TRUMP:  Thank you very much.

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU:  Mr. President, I want to say something, because this is the first meeting we’ve had since your historic decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel’s capital and to move the embassy, and now to expedite the movement of the embassy, to Jerusalem.

I want to say that this is a historic decision that will be forever etched in the hearts of our people for generations to come.  People say that this pushes peace backward.  I say it pushes peace forward because it recognizes history, it recognizes the present reality, and peace can only be built on the basis of truth.  And by recognizing this history, you’ve made history.  And we will always remember that.

We also support you completely in your stalwart position on the Iran nuclear deal.  You’ve said it’s a disastrous deal.  You’ve said that if its fatal flaws are not fixed, that you should walk away from it.  And I want you to know that if you decide to do that, then we will back you all the way.

We also appreciate the fact that you confront Iran’s aggression with us and with other parties in the region as never before.  I’ve never seen the holistic alliance between the United States, Israel, and your other allies in the region as strong, as unified as it is under your leadership.

And the last point is, you stood up for Israel at the U.N. in a remarkable way — rock-solid support.  This is a place — it’s a house of slander against Israel and against the United States.  And by word and deed, you have told them enough is enough.

As you finish your first year in office, I want to say that I look forward to continuing our remarkable, tremendous friendship in the years ahead.  And I want to express the appreciation of the people of Israel to you.

Thank you, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT TRUMP:  Thank you very much, Bibi.  Thank you.  My honor.

I have to say, on the United Nations, we were pretty much out in the wilderness by ourselves — the United States.  And we heard every country was going to be against us.  And it was very interesting.  I said, you know, we give billions and billions of dollars to these countries.  It amounts to hundreds of millions, and sometimes into the billions for certain countries, and they vote against us.  And I made a very simple statement that I’m watching.  I’m watching.  And we ended up getting 68 votes, either “yes” or “we’ll take a neutral position,” which was okay too.

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU:  Which was a “yes.”

PRESIDENT TRUMP:  Which was essentially a “yes,” that’s right.  But we ended up getting a lot of votes that we were —  I would say, virtually, we were going to get none.

And we give billions of dollars away every year to countries, and in many cases, those countries don’t even support us.  They don’t support the United States.

Israel has always supported the United States.  So what I did with Jerusalem was my honor.  And hopefully, we can do something with peace.  I would love to see it.

You know, if you look back at the various peace proposals — and they are endless — and I spoke to some of the people involved, and I said, “Did you ever talk about the vast amounts of funds, money that we give to the Palestinians?”  We give, you know, hundreds of millions of dollars.  And they said, “We never talk.”  Well, we do talk about it.

And when they disrespected us a week ago by not allowing our great Vice President to see them — and we give them hundreds of millions of dollars in aid and support — tremendous numbers; numbers that nobody understands.  That money is on the table, and that money is not going to them unless they sit down and negotiate peace.  Because I can tell you that Israel does want to make peace.  And they’re going to have to want to make peace too, or we’re going to have nothing to do with it any longer.

This was never brought up by other negotiators, but it’s brought up by me.  So I will say that the hardest subject they had to talk about was Jerusalem.  We took Jerusalem off the table, so we don’t have to talk about it anymore.  They never got past Jerusalem.  We took it off the table.  We don’t have to talk about it anymore.  You won one point, and you’ll give up some points later on in the negotiation, if it ever takes place.  I don’t know that it ever will take place.

But they have to respect the process also, and they have to respect the fact that the U.S. has given tremendous support to them over the years, in terms of monetary support and other support.

So we’ll see what happens with the peace process, but respect has to be shown to the U.S. or we’re just not going any further.  Thank you all very much.

Thank you very much, everybody.

Q    (Inaudible.)

PRESIDENT TRUMP:  Steve, go ahead.  Speak up, Steve.  That’s not like you.

Q    Are you close to putting out some sort of Middle East peace plan — proposal?

PRESIDENT TRUMP:  We’ll see what happens.  Yes, we have a proposal for peace.  It’s a great proposal for the Palestinians.  I think it’s a very good proposal for Israel.  It covers a lot of the things that were, over the years, discussed and agreed on.  But the fact is — and I think you know this better than anybody — there were never any deals that came close, because Jerusalem — you could never get past Jerusalem.

So when people said, “Oh, I set it back” — I didn’t set it back, I helped it.  Because by taking it off the table, that was the toughest issue.  And Israel will pay for that.  Look, Israel — something is going to happen.  They’ll do something that’s going to be a very good thing.  But they want to make peace, and I hope the Palestinians want to make peace.  And if they do, everybody is going to be very happy in the end.  We’ll see what happens, Steve.  We’re going to see what happens.

Q    Mr. President, any comments about Abu Mazen’s remarks regarding you personally?

PRESIDENT TRUMP:  No, I didn’t really read his remarks, personally.  I think I’m probably better off not seeing them.  But we’ve done a lot for them, and hopefully they’re going to make peace for their people.

You know what, it’s many years of killing people.  It’s many years of killing each other.  They have to be tired and disgusted of it.  So let’s see what happens.  I think, eventually, very sound minds — I hope sound minds — are going to prevail.  And it would be a great achievement of mine.  I’ve said it from day one, if we could make peace between Israel and the Palestinians — if we do that, I would consider that one of our truly great achievements.

But the money is on the table.  The money was never on the table.  I’ll tell you up front, we give them tremendous amounts — hundreds of millions of dollars a year.  That money is on the table.  Because why should we do that, as a country, if they’re doing nothing for us?  And what we want to do for them is help them.  We want to create peace and save lives.  And we’ll see what happens.  We’ll see what happens.  But the money is on the table.

Thank you very much.

Q    Are you ending the aid immediately?

Q    Mr. President, what does the timeline look like?

PRESIDENT TRUMP:  Any time they want.  Any time they want.

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