Netanyahu Worries of Possible US Anti-Settlement Action at UN

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Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Wednesday expressed concern that US President Barack Obama, during the final days of his term in office, might take diplomatic steps that could harm the fate of Jewish settlements in the West Bank.

Israel is concerned that the United States might not rally to its assistance in the event that an anti-settlement resolution is put to a vote in the United Nations Security Council and that Washington might not use its veto to quash such a move.

Obama's strong opposition to Israeli construction on the disputed territories has also raised speculation in Israel that he might try to define parameters for a final peace agreement that has eluded Israel and the Palestinians since interim deals were signed in the early 1990s.

The last an attempt to reach an agreement between the two parties and determine final borders collapsed in 2014.

A statement from Netanyahu's office clarified that he had told residents of the settlements in a closed meeting last week he hoped Obama would not act in the same way that some previous US administrations had done at the end of their term, when they had "promoted initiatives that did not align with Israel's interests". He did not specify any examples.

The statement repeated what Netanyahu had already told Israeli reporters in New York following his address to the UN General Assembly last month when he said: "I can only hope that the US's consistent policy will continue to the end of his (Obama's) tenure (on January 20)."

It also denied what Israeli Channel 2 had ascribed to Netanyahu earlier on Wednesday when it quoted him as telling the settlers that "in the coming period, between the US elections and the end of the term of Obama—the entire settlement movement is under threat."

In keeping with its consistent criticism of Israeli construction, Washington issued a strong rebuke earlier this week at Israeli plans to build what it called a new Jewish settlement which the former said would damage prospects for peace with the Palestinians. Israel however, insists that the settlement is not new but would rather constitute construction in an already existing settlement.

Despite Israel maintaining as such, Washington also accused Israel, in unusually harsh words, of going back on its word that no new settlements would be built. Obama raised concerns on the matter when [he met Netanyahu in New York.](http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0%2C7340%2CL-4858266%2C00.html)

The United States contends that the project constitutes the establishment of a new settlement in the West Bank, contrary to assurances Netanyahu made to Obama that no new settlements would be built. Israel regards the planned homes as part of an existing settlement.