Israel’s Benjamin Netanyahu Summons U.S. Ambassador in Protest at U.N. Resolution

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<http://www.wsj.com/articles/israel-summons-u-s-ambassador-in-protest-at-u-n-resolution-1482687117>

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu summoned the U.S. ambassador on Sunday [to lodge a protest](http://www.wsj.com/articles/israels-netanyahu-calls-white-house-action-on-u-n-resolution-shameful-1482616533) over the Obama administration’s failure to block a United Nations resolution that condemned Jewish settlements in the West Bank, Israeli officials said.

The Israeli foreign ministry also summoned top diplomats from 10 of the 14 countries [who voted in favor of the resolution that deemed the settlements illegal and an obstacle to peace](http://www.wsj.com/articles/israeli-settlement-censure-back-on-u-n-calendar-1482515573), the officials said. Israel doesn’t have diplomatic relations with some countries that voted for the U.N. Security Council resolution on Friday, such as Malaysia, while other countries don’t have permanent representatives in the country.

It was the first time in 36 years the Security Council was able to adopt a resolution condemning Israeli settlement construction in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. It was approved with 14 members in favor and the U.S. abstaining, while in the past the U.S. had used its veto power to block such resolutions.

Israel expressed its consternation to U.S. ambassador Daniel Shapiro at a meeting in the prime minister’s office, insisting the resolution wouldn’t help to bring Israelis and Palestinians together for talks, according to an Israeli official. In Washington, a U.S. State Department spokesperson confirmed that Messrs. Netanyahu and Shapiro were scheduled to meet Sunday, but declined to comment further.

“Acts such as these hinder peace and [do] not promote it. That was the message,” said another Israeli official, adding that representatives of the U.K., China, Russia, France and other states had individual meetings with Israeli officials.

The reprimand of diplomats follows two days of Israeli condemnations of the White House administration for allowing the U.N. resolution to pass. It underscored the deep disagreements between President Barack Obama and the Israeli leader over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

A spokesman for the prime minister’s office declined to comment further on the content of the discussion between Messrs. Netanyahu and Shapiro.

Earlier on Sunday, Mr. Netanyahu again accused the U.S. of concocting the resolution with the Palestinian leadership to undermine Israel.

“We have no doubt that the Obama administration initiated it, stood behind it, coordinated on the wording and demanded that it be passed,” Mr. Netanyahu told the weekly cabinet meeting, according to a statement from his office.

The White House denies that it colluded with the Palestinians to put forward the resolution and argues that its abstention was in line with decades of Democratic and Republican policy.

U.S. officials have said the administration repeatedly warned Israel against settlement building in the West Bank and has been alarmed at the growth in construction this year.

About 430,000 Jewish Israelis live in the West Bank, according to the Yesha Council, an NGO representing settlers. Another roughly 200,000 live in East Jerusalem, according to Peace Now, another NGO. About 3.9 million Palestinian live in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, according to the Palestinian Authority’s bureau of statistics. Mr. Netanyahu’s official policy is to pursue a separate Palestinian state. But he has also overseen an increase of more than 100,000 settlers since winning power for the second time in 2009.

Israel started construction of 1,195 housing units in the West Bank during the first six months of the year, up 40% compared with the second half of 2015, according to monitoring group Peace Now.

The U.N. vote followed days of international diplomatic drama as Israel directly lobbied President-elect Donald Trump to intervene against the adoption of the resolution.

Mr. Trump lobbied against the resolution and called Egypt’s President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi to press the Arab leader to oppose the resolution.

Egypt initially drafted the resolution for a vote on Thursday last week. But after the conversation between Messrs. Trump and Sisi, it pulled the resolution. The final resolution was instead co-sponsored by New Zealand, Malaysia, Venezuela and Senegal.

Israeli government ministers and opposition lawmakers opposed the U.S. decision as did U.S. congressmen from both the Democratic and Republican parties.

Mr. Trump on Saturday reiterated his support for Israel, saying the U.N. resolution would make it much harder to negotiate peace.

“Too bad, but we will get it done anyway!” the president-elect tweeted.

The last round of U.S.-brokered peace talks collapsed in 2014 over disputes about land and settlements.

Mr. Netanyahu has repeatedly called on Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas to return to talks without preconditions. The Palestinians have instead sought to put pressure on Israel in international bodies to make concessions on key issues such as settlements and the status of Jerusalem.

Mr. Netanyahu has indicated that he could shift his positions once he meets with Mr. Trump, telling reporters earlier this month the new administration was “an opportunity to pursue some new ideas.”