Netanyahu Slams Kerry's Speech Defending UN Vote as 'Unbalanced'

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Israel fired back at Secretary of State John Kerry on Wednesday, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu blasting Kerry’s lengthy televised rebuke of the Middle Eastern democracy.

Netanyahu, speaking in Jerusalem just over an hour after Kerry’s speech had ended, said Kerry's rhetoric was "as unbalanced as the anti-Israel resolution passed [at the United Nations] last week."

"Secretary Kerry paid lip service to the unrelenting campaign of terror that has been waged by the Palestinians against the Jewish State," he said, later adding: "Israelis do not need to be lectured about the importance of peace by foreign leaders."

Israeli officials have said since the Security Council resolution was passed on Friday that the U.S. played a covert role in developing the proposal -- charges the U.S. has denied. Israel's government was enraged after the U.S. abstained from voting on the resolution, which called Israeli settlements in the West Bank and east Jerusalem a violation of international law.

But Netanyahu on Wednesday made the firmest -- and most-high ranking -- accusation that America secretly worked toward advancing the resolution.

"We have it on absolutely incontestable evidence the U.S. organized, advanced and brought this resolution to the Security Council," said Netanyahu, who promised to share the "sensitive" intelligence with the incoming administration of President-elect Donald Trump.

Trump tweeted his support for Israel before Kerry even spoke, and Netanyahu quickly returned the goodwill on Twitter: "President-elect Trump, thank you for your warm friendship and your clear-cut support for Israel!"

During his remarks, Netanyahu again looked past the Obama administration and addressed Trump.

"Israel looks forward to working with President-elect Trump and with the American Congress – Democrats and Republicans alike – to mitigate the damage this resolution has done and ultimately repeal it," he said.

Netanyahu said that while he sought peace, his Palestinian counterpart, President Mahmoud Abbas, has walked away from peace offers "time and time again."

Earlier Wednesday, Kerry sparked the diplomatic showdown when he questioned Netanyahu's commitment to Palestinian statehood. Though Netanyahu has said he believes in the two-state solution, Kerry said Netanyahu’s government is “the most right-wing in Israel's history.”

“If the choice is one state, Israel can either be Jewish or democratic, it cannot be both, and it won't ever really be at peace,” Kerry said.

Abbas in a statement "reiterated his commitment to a just and lasting peace as a strategic option," saying Palestinians would resume negotiations "the minute the Israeli government agrees to cease all settlement activities."

Netanyahu’s office, however, immediately slammed Kerry’s speech as "skewed against Israel" and "obsessively" dealing with the issue of Israeli settlements.

Netanyahu spoke shortly after the Israeli Attorney General’s office approved a police probe of the prime minister in two separate cases, The Times of Israel reported, citing Channel 10. A Netanyahu spokesman had previously told Haaeretz the case was "nonsense."

Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations Danny Danon also panned Kerry's speech.

"To coordinate anti-Israeli initiatives with the Palestinians at the U.N. and to advance a one-sided resolution against Israel in the Security Council is the opposite of supporting Israel," Danon said. "The Obama Administration acted against Israel at the U.N. and any claim to the contrary is a distortion of reality."

Almost immediately after Kerry’s speech, Netanyahu posted to his Facebook page a 2008 image of Obama’s visit to Israel alongside two captions: “2008: Presidential candidate Barack Obama at the Western Wall; 2016: UN calls the Western Wall ‘occupied Palestinian territory.’”

“Seriously?” Netanyahu wrote.