**'US may stop using UN veto on resolutions targeting Israel'**

'Guardian' says US official assured Abbas Washington could consider allowing such measures to pass if there's provocative settlement activity.

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In an attempt to launch indirect proximity talks between Israel and the Palestinians, the US has given private assurances that it would consider not using its veto power against UN Security Council condemnations of any significant new settlement activity, the Guardian reported.

A Palestinian source quoted by the UK paper said David Hale, a deputy of US Middle East envoy George Mitchell, told Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas last week that if there was "significantly provocative settlement activity," including in east Jerusalem, Washington may consider allowing UNSC resolutions censuring Israel to pass. According to the paper, the source said "it was understood that meant the US would abstain from voting on a resolution rather than use its veto."

However, chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat denied assurances were given. "It's not true," he said, according to the Guardian. "We are still talking to the Americans."

Meanwhile, in an interview with the Chinese Xinhua news agency on Wednesday, Abbas claimed the US had vowed to stop "any provocative activities" by Israel in a bid to resume Middle East peace talks.

Abbas said when "the credibility of the US pledges are demonstrated," the negotiations "would restart immediately."

The PA president criticized Washington for "not exerting enough effort to press Israel to achieve peace," but reiterated his opposition to a unilateral declaration of statehood.

"We want our state to be declared under an international agreement," he said. "If this doesn't happen, the Arabs will go to the UN Security Council to get the recognition of the Palestinian statehood," the PA president told Xinhua.