Abbas’s Empty Bombshell

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<http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Analysis-Abbass-Empty-Bombshell-419551>

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas [has finally dropped his long-awaited bombshell at the United Nations General Assembly,](http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/WATCH-LIVE-Abbas-gives-major-address-to-UN-General-Assembly-in-New-York-419482) but it turns out that the bombshell is not as serious as many thought. It’s a bombshell that makes much noise and little damage.

Abbas did not announce his resignation or the dismantlement of the Palestinian Authority, as many predicted he would do. Such a move would have been considered a real bombshell.

Instead, he repeated his old threat to abandon signed accords with Israel “as long as Israel refuses to commit to the agreements with us.”

His assertion that the Palestinians “cannot continue to be bound by these agreements” is perhaps the only dramatic statement he made in his speech. But again, this should be seen as nothing but another threat, not the bombshell that Abbas promised a few weeks ago.

However, it doesn’t seem to be the kind of bombshell that causes real damage. It’s a bombshell that consists of a threat that has previously been made by Abbas and other senior Palestinian officials. This is another conditional threat by Abbas and not a straightforward announcement abrogating the Oslo Accords and other agreements with Israel.

In his speech, Abbas did not abandon the peace process with Israel, as some have mistakenly argued.

He did not dissolve the Palestinian Authority and “return the keys” to Israel. He did not even go as far as suspending security coordination with Israel – without which the Palestinian Authority would not be able to survive in the West Bank.

In short, Abbas did not close all doors with Israel. He put the pistol on the table instead of firing it. His message to Israel and the rest of the world: Next time I won’t hesitate to use the pistol if I don’t get everything I want.

For now, it’s clear that Abbas’s speech is not going to change anything on the ground. Abbas is going nowhere, and so is the Palestinian Authority.

Apart from the harmless bombshell, Abbas’s speech did not include anything new. In fact, this was the same charge sheet he and his senior aides have been bringing forward against Israel for the past few years.

His fiery anti-Israel rhetoric, especially concerning the holy sites in Jerusalem and settler violence, are mostly intended for internal consumption. The charges he made against Israel are designed to appease his critics and other Palestinians who are skeptical of his intentions and policies.