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**Nikki Haley**

*Press Conference After Attending First UN Security Council Meeting on the Middle East*

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Good morning. First of all, as this is the first time I have dealt with this press corps, I just want to say that I hope that we can have a lot more conversations and continue to do these types of things. But I'll ask that I will respect you if you'll respect me. So as we develop this relationship, we'll see how it goes.

So the first I want to do is talk about what we just saw in there. And the Security Council just finished its regular monthly meeting on Middle East issues. It's the first meeting like that that I've attended, and I have to say it was a bit strange.

The Security Council is supposed to discuss how to maintain international peace and security. But at our meeting on the Middle East, the discussion was not about Hizballah's illegal build-up of rockets in Lebanon. It was not about the money and weapons Iran provides to terrorists. It was not about how we defeat ISIS. It was not about how we hold Bashar al-Assad accountable for the slaughter of hundreds and thousands of civilians. No, instead, the meeting focused on criticizing Israel, the one true democracy in the Middle East.



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I am new around here, but I understand that's how the Council has operated, month after month, for decades.

I'm here to say the United States will not turn a blind eye to this anymore. I am here to underscore the ironclad support of the United States for Israel. I'm here to emphasize the United States is determined to stand up to the UN's anti-Israel bias. We will never repeat the terrible mistake of Resolution 2334 and allow one-sided Security Council resolutions to condemn Israel. Instead, we will push for action on the real threats we face in the Middle East.

We stand for peace. We support a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that is negotiated directly between the two parties, as President Trump reiterated in his meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu yesterday.<sup>1</sup> The outrageously biased resolutions from the Security Council and the General Assembly only make peace harder to attain by discouraging one of the parties from going to the negotiating table.

Incredibly, the UN Department of Political Affairs has an entire division devoted to Palestinian affairs. Imagine that. There is no division devoted to illegal missile launches from North Korea. There is no division devoted to the world's number one state-sponsor of terror, Iran. The prejudiced approach to Israeli-Palestinian issues does the peace process no favors. And it bears no relationship to the reality of the world around us.

The double standards are breathtaking. Just a few days ago, the United States sought, unsuccessfully, to have the Security Council condemn a terrorist attack to Israel, where the terrorist opened fire on people waiting for a bus, and then stabbed others. The Security Council would not hesitate to condemn an attack like that in any other country. But not for Israel. The statement was blocked. And that's downright shameful.

Israel exists in a region where others call for its complete destruction and in a world where anti-Semitism is on the rise. These are threats that we should discuss at the United Nations as we continue working toward a comprehensive agreement that would end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.



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But outside of the UN, there is some good news. Israel's place in the world is changing. Israel is building up new diplomatic relationships. More and more countries recognize how much Israel contributes to the world. They are recognizing that Israel is a beacon of stability in a troubled region, and that Israel is at the forefront of innovation, entrepreneurship, and technological discovery.

It is the UN's anti-Israel bias that is long overdue for change. The United States will not hesitate to speak out against these biases in defense of our friend and ally, Israel.

I will say that we were -- I think we saw maybe a slightly different tone in the meeting, but we will have to see how it goes forward.

Thank you.



And I'll open it up for any questions you have.

Yes. [to reporter]

**Question:** Madam Ambassador, can I ask you about the meeting today? We heard the UN envoy say that the "two-state solution" is "the only way" to reach peace in the Middle East. Now, I'm wondering how are you going to square that, as you go forward, with what President Trump said today -- yesterday about there being other possibilities. And also, on -- on the settlements resolution, do you have anything in mind to correct that "terrible mistake," as you put that?

**Ambassador Haley:** Well I think, first of all, the Administration -- and the United States -- supports a two-state solution. But what we support more is peace and stability. And by bringing the two to the table to have them talk through this in a fresh way -- to say, "Okay, we're going to go back to the drawing board; what can we agree on?" -- that's what the United States wants. We want to facilitate both the Palestinian Authority and Israelis coming together, being accountable, and moving forward for peace. And that's what we're going to continue to support.



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[crosstalk]

Yes.

**Question:** Madam Ambassador, thank you. This is [intelligible] with [unintelligible] network. Ambassador, since you are a member of that Administration, many people -- I'm from Kurdistan region of Iraq and as you know Kurds are main partner of United States in fight of - of terrorism in both Syria and Iraq. They want clarity. What is the Administration's policy -- what does Administration want to do in Iraq and in Syria when it come to the fighting of terrorism and ISIS.

**Ambassador Haley:** Well I think first we want to stop the violence. That's the biggest thing is stop the violence, and find a way to bring some stability to the area. But you're seeing that the Administration is starting to develop plans and actions. It's not just about, "What are the talking points on this area going to be?" It's, "What are the actions are we going to do to facilitate peace and stability?" And that's where the focus of the Administration and the United States is going.

[crosstalk]

Yes.

**Question:** Madam Ambassador, do you have any plan -- do you have any plan to undo this monthly talk about the Palestinian question and the three-monthly open debate on it that is on the agenda of the Security Council?

**Ambassador Haley:** You know, I just put out to the members of the Security Council to help me understand, when we have so much going on in the world, why is it that every single month we're going to sit down and have a hearing where all they do is obsess over Israel? That's the problem. And so what I'm saying is that we want to have constructive influence. I think what's happening is it's now becoming counteractive to the peace process. When the UN becomes -- comes into the middle of it, and is more of a divider than a uniter, it is a cause for concern. I think everyone's well intentioned. I think they are trying to find stability. But this obsession every month to continue to -- to go over this, instead of encouraging the Palestinians and Israelis to come together to a table, that's where the focus should be.



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But we have a lot of other issues in the world that we're trying to deal with -- whether it's ISIS, whether it's North Korea, whether it's all the instability we're seeing in other regions, that's where we need to focus.

One more question.

Yes.

**Question:** Thank you very much, Madam Ambassador. As a quick follow-up on settlements, the President asked the Israelis to hold back on settlements. Was this something that you raised during the Council meeting? Was it discussed? Was there any welcome for this? And secondly, when you arrived here one of the first things you said was that the U.S. was going "to have the backs" of its allies; you hoped the allies had the back of the United States. And for those who didn't, you were "taking names" and that there would be some kind of accountability. Are you making a list? And who's on it?

**Ambassador Haley:** You want to see my list, don't you? You know, what I'll tell you is first of all when it come to the settlements, we don't that that is the sole reason that we are not getting peace in this process. What the President has said, and that -- that we agree on, is expanding settlements at this point is not helpful. And so that's basically what we're saying to both sides -- is, "Okay, let's take a pause, and at some point let's both come together willingly" -- and, you know, wanting to actually see some constructive action take place. And I think that's what you're going to see the President try and do. And that's what we're going to try and do in facilitating. We'll just, unbiased, bring them to the table and say, "Okay, we're going to do this." What we see at the UN is it's always the focus of the Palestinian Authority, but it's never been the focus of Israel as well. And as long we have that bias at the UN it becomes very difficult for us to do that.

In terms of the "taking names," you can go back to South Carolina. That's exactly how I governed, which was, "You know, you all are in this for the greater good, and that's what we hope. But when you tell me you're going to do something and you don't..." That's where you take names. When you see that there is someone that promises to -- to do something and they don't -- that's where we take names. So, there is no special list in my drawer in the desk.



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It is more observations and trying to make sure that -- in the past, I think, the previous Administration had not been very strong when it came to international issues -- had not spoken out when something was wrong, had not necessarily really moved to be a part of the peace process.

What you're seeing with this Administration is -- you're going to see a lot of action. You're going to see a lot of participation. And, yes, we are going to take names. If we see someone that's not doing what they're supposed to, we're going to call them out. That's why called out Russia. And, so we'll continue to do that as we see other issues come up.

[crosstalk]

Yes.

**Question:** Madam Ambassador, is the U.S. going to stick to its obligations in -- under Resolution 181 and 1515, which were adopted and drafted by the United States? And those resolutions called for the two-state solution and -- as a base for the peaceful solution in the Middle East.

**Ambassador Haley:** Understand that the United States supports the two-state resolution. That's never been waived. What we're saying is, "Okay, let's not just talk about the old way of doing things." Come to the table with all the fresh atmosphere of perspectives that we now have and say, "Okay, what can we do, knowing all of the factors, knowing where we sit present day, and how can we move forward?"

**Question:** [unintelligible]

**Ambassador Haley:** And I said we support the two-state solution.

Last question.

[cross talk]



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**Question:** Just to clarify, you -- you heard from the Secretary General yesterday, there's "no Plan B." There is only the two-state solution as a path forward. You heard today his envoy for the Middle East peace process repeat that same message. In your view, is there a Plan B?

**Ambassador Haley:** I think -- Well, I think, first of all, the two-state solution is what we support. Let's -- I mean anybody that wants to say the United States doesn't support two-state solution, that would be an error. We absolutely support a two-state solution. But, we are thinking out-of-the-box as well, which is: "What does it take to bring these two sides to the table?" "What do we need have them agree on?" At the end of the day, the solution to what will bring peace in the Middle East is going to come from the Israelis and the Palestinian Authority. The United States is just there to support the process.

All right? Thank you very much. Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> To wit: "Our administration is committed to working with Israel and our common allies in the region towards greater security and stability. That includes working toward a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians. The United States will encourage a peace and, really, a great peace deal. We'll be working on it very, very diligently. Very important to me also -- something we want to do. But **it is the parties themselves who must directly negotiate such an agreement.** We'll be beside them; we'll be working with them." [emphasis added; Joint Press Conference Remarks by President Trump and PM Netanyahu, 15 February 2017]