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TRUMP'S UN ENVOY PROMISES MORAL CLARITY



Nikki Haley, President-elect Donald Trump's choice for U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations

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"I will not go to New York and abstain when the UN seeks to create an international environment that encourages boycotts of Israel" - Nikki Haley

President-elect Donald Trump's choice for ambassador to the UN vowed Wednesday a sharp turn in US policy at the international body, questioning its bias against Israel and its inability to address the world's most pressing crises.

At her Senate confirmation hearing, Nikki Haley, who currently serves as South Carolina's governor, slammed the Obama administration for allowing "mistreatment" of Israel in the halls of an organization with a long record of disproportionately targeting the Jewish state. She called a resolution that passed through the Security Council last month condemning Israel's settlement enterprise – facilitated by a US abstention – "the ultimate low," a "terrible mistake," a "kick in the gut" and a message to the world that America's commitments to its allies ring hollow.

The resolution, numbered 2334, suggested that "being an ally of the United States doesn't mean anything," Haley told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Haley said, "I will never abstain when the United Nations takes any action that comes in direct conflict with the interests and values of the United States" (friendship with, and support of, Israel being one of her values).

As she prepared for her Senate hearing, Haley spent considerable time weighing the incoming administration's options for rolling back the effects of 2334. She settled on a strategy of carefully leveraging American aid to UN bodies, she told the committee.

"You have to really question the goals of the Human Rights Council," she said, noting the council's repeated targeting of Israel under rotating leadership that has included China, Cuba and Iran. "We host the UN, and that should give us great leverage." Yes, one would think so.

House leadership aides told *The Jerusalem Post* on Tuesday that Republicans are preparing a significant and early debate over US funding to UN bodies – a move that may gain the support of the incoming Trump administration, which has expressed disdain for the UN and for global institutions in general.

Yet, Haley said she would not support a "slash and burn" approach to funding at the UN. A more nuanced approach is necessary, she argued, wherein the US only threatens cuts if specific bodies are simply not working or fail to comport with American values.

“We made Israel more vulnerable – we made America more vulnerable in that we did not stand by our allies,” Haley said, promising “moral clarity” from Washington’s UN mission under her leadership.

While speaking clearly on Israel – perhaps the single most frequent point of questioning throughout her hearing – the governor contrasted with some other members of the incoming Trump administration on several points, including with her prospective future boss, secretary of state nominee Rex Tillerson.

Regarding the Israeli settlements question, she said, “I do understand how they think that can hinder peace,” she said of settlements. “But, at the same time, *I will always stand with Israel.*”

Regarding peace efforts, she said, “The UN is the wrong body in which to facilitate a final peace accord.” To that end, Haley said the Trump administration would fight Palestinian Authority efforts to be recognized within the body as a sovereign state.

“It is an obsession that they have with Israel [that] they don’t have with North Korea, [that] they don’t have with Syria,” she said of the Security Council. “We have to look at the fact and call out the fact.”

Haley also said she would “absolutely” support Trump’s move of America’s embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem – a top priority for the president-elect’s choice for Israel envoy, David Friedman.

Contrasting with Tillerson, who in his own hearing before the same committee declined to characterize Russia’s role in killing civilians in Syria’s civil war, Haley said Moscow had committed “war crimes” and agreed with one senator’s description that a genocide had occurred there.

On Iran, Haley joined fellow members of Trump’s emerging national security council – in calling for a review of the international agreement governing the nuclear program brokered in 2015. She joined her future colleagues in a warning against completely abandoning the deal, while citing its many shortcomings.

“I think what would be more beneficial at this point is that we look at all details of the Iran deal,” Haley said. “If it is not being followed, and if there are violations, then we must act strongly.”

Ambassador to the UN Danny Danon offered a statement of thanks to Haley for expressing “unequivocal support” in her testimony.

“We are looking forward to working with her in full cooperation in order to undo the damage of the shameful Security Council resolution,” Danon said. “This is the time to lead the way to a new era in the UN and to significant reforms that will put an end to the obsession with Israel.”

“We have always been the moral compass of the world, and we need to continue to act out and vocalize that going forward,” Haley told the committee [based on article from *JPost* January 18].

“And I will bless those who bless you [Israel] and curse those who curse you” (Genesis 12:3).

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