

Nikki Haley in farewell talk: U.N. 'hopelessly biased' on Israel



Nikki Haley, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, spoke for the last time at the monthly Security Council meeting, saying Tuesday that the world body is “hopelessly biased” against Israel. U.N. screenshot

(UPI) — Nikki Haley, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, described the world body as “hopelessly biased” against Israel on Tuesday in her last address to the monthly Security Council meeting.

Haley, who will leave her post in January, spoke during the council’s meeting on the Middle East.

“Over the past two years, I have attempted to provide more value in this monthly meeting by using my time to speak about other pressing problems in the Middle East,” Haley said. “I’ve done it to illustrate that most of the region’s problems have absolutely nothing to do with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. And I’ve done it to encourage the U.N. to move away from its obsession with Israel.

But she broke from tradition to address the Israel-Palestinian issue. Two weeks ago, the General Assembly failed to adopt a U.S. resolution condemning terrorism by Hamas. Yet it has passed more than 700 resolutions critical of Israel over the years, she said.

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“This U.N. obsession has been entirely unproductive,” Haley said. “It’s actually worse than that. The UN’s obsession with this issue has been counterproductive. It has sent a loud and false message to the Palestinians that they just might be able to achieve their goals by relying on the U.N., rather than through direct negotiations. And it has sent a loud and accurate message to the Israelis that they can never trust the U.N. This biased obsession is not the path to peace. It is the path to an endless stalemate.”

Haley mentioned the Trump administration plans to unveil a Middle East peace plan early next year. Rather than being a few pages “containing unspecific and unimaginative guidelines” she said “thoughtful detail” will be included.

“It brings new elements to the discussion, taking advantage of the new world of technology we now live in,” the U.S. ambassador said. “It recognizes that realities on the ground in the Middle East have changed in powerful and important ways. This plan will be different from all previous ones — the critical question is whether the response to it will be any different.”

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In her speech, she noted both sides would benefit with a peace agreement, saying “the Palestinians would benefit more, and the Israelis would risk more.”

“Israel is a thriving, strong, prosperous country,” Haley said. “It has always wanted peace with its neighbors. It has clearly demonstrated its willingness to make big sacrifices for peace, including giving up large areas of land. But Israel will not make a peace agreement at just any price, and it shouldn’t. No U.N. resolutions, anti-Semitic boycotts or terrorist threats will ever change that.”

She noted that Israel has faced threats to its security, saying: “It would be foolish for it to make a deal that weakened its security. And yet, even in the face of constant threats, Israel has become one of the leading nations in the world. Israel wants a peace agreement, but it doesn’t need one.”

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Palestinians want peace, she said.

“Like the Israelis, they are a deservedly proud people,” Haley said. “They too do not need to accept a peace agreement at any price. But the condition of the Palestinian people is very different. Economic opportunity, healthcare, even electricity are all scarce in the Palestinian territories. Terrorists rule much of the territory, undermining the safety of all civilians.

She blamed the nation’s leadership on not working toward a peace plan.

“The Palestinian people are suffering terribly while their leadership clings to 50-year-old demands that have only become less and less realistic,” Haley said. “What awaits the Palestinian people with a peace agreement are the prospects of a massive improvement in the quality of their lives and far greater control over their political future.”

During less than a two-year tenure, the United States withdrew from the U.N. Human Rights Council — which Haley called a “cesspool of political bias” — and has cut funding to the U.N. Palestinian refugee agency.

And in a change from 2017, the United States voted against an annual resolution condemning the “occupation” by Israel of the Golan Heights. Last year, it abstained.

“My hope is that as soon as — I am soon to be an outside observer who has invested so much time on this issue — that we will not still be having the same conversation, the same old speeches, in years to come,” she ended her speech.

President Donald Trump has nominate Heather Nauert, a State Department spokeswoman and former Fox News host, to succeed Haley in 2019.

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