

Trump and Netanyahu to Meet Monday, Discuss Iran Nuclear Deal and Israeli-Palestinian Peace

Iran will be the main focus of the meeting, according to senior officials ■ Netanyahu's speech Tuesday before the UN General Assembly expected to be shorter than prior addresses

NEW YORK - Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will be meeting here Monday with U.S. President Donald Trump, the first time the two have met since Trump came to Israel in May. Senior Israeli and American officials noted that the meeting, which is scheduled to last an hour, will deal with the Iranian issue and with Trump's efforts to advance the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians.

Senior Israeli officials noted that Netanyahu would prefer that the meeting with Trump focus primarily on Iran. Netanyahu will try to persuade the president to work toward withdrawing the United States from the nuclear agreement between Iran and the great powers, which would effectively scuttle it. On October 15 Trump is slated to inform the U.S. Congress if Iran is meeting its obligations under the agreement. Netanyahu wants Trump to announce that the Iranians are not fulfilling their part of the agreement, which would allow Congress to reimpose sanctions on Iran.

Netanyahu's position contradicts the position of the overwhelming majority of Trump's senior advisers, as well as the position of Defense Secretary James Mattis and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson. Senior administration officials are pushing Trump not to pull out of the nuclear agreement and to suffice with steps to increase inspections of Iran's nuclear installations and to stop its terror activities in the Middle East.

U.S. National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster, who is also encouraging Trump to stick with the agreement, addressed the issue Sunday in an interview with Fox News, saying that the administration is interested in an immediate increase in oversight of Iran. McMaster, however, refrained from saying whether Trump is seeking to void the agreement, or to uphold it but with more meticulous

inspections.

“The IAEA has identified and we’ve identified some of these breaches that Iran has then corrected,” he said. “But what does that tell you about Iranian behavior? They’re not just walking up to the line on the agreement. They’re crossing the line at times. So, there has to be much more rigorous enforcement of the deal and we have to recognize the fundamental flaws in this deal.”

Asked if the president would be prepared to “live with the deal,” McMaster answered: “Well, we have to see what live with it means, right? Live with can’t be giving this regime cover to develop a nuclear capability.”

He added that the current agreement “gave all these benefits to the Iranian regime upfront and these benefits they are now using to foment this humanitarian catastrophe in the greater Middle East.”

Tillerson, who is expected to meet Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammed Jawad Zarif for the first time of the countries signed the nuclear deal during a conference in New York, told CBS that Iran is “in technical compliance with the deal,” but is violating the spirit of the agreement through its terror activity throughout the Middle East.

“There clearly was an expectation between the parties, the negotiators from the Western parties as well as Iran, that by dealing with this nuclear threat we would lower the tension between Iran and the rest of the world and we would create conditions for Iran to rejoin the community of nations as a productive country that wants stability and wants peace,” said Tillerson.

“But since the nuclear deal has been concluded what we have witnessed is Iran has stepped up its destabilizing activities in Yemen. It’s stepped up its destabilizing activities in Syria. It exports arms to Hezbollah and other terrorist groups. And it continues to conduct a very active ballistic missile program. None of that, I would believe, is consistent with that preamble commitment that was made by everyone,” he said.

On Tuesday Netanyahu is scheduled to address the UN General Assembly, and like many of his previous speeches to that forum he is expected to focus on the Iranian issue. His address, however, is expected to be shorter than his previous ones that generally lasted more than half an hour. During his speech Netanyahu is expected to make a direct appeal to Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali

Khamenei.

The Netanyahu-Trump meeting is expected to also deal with the Palestinian issues and the U.S. president's effort to find a way to jump-start the peace process. On Wednesday Trump is expected to meet with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas on the same topic.

Senior White House officials have in recent days been trying to reduce expectations from Trump's meetings with Netanyahu and Abbas, noting that the president has no intention of trying to bring about a breakthrough in the process during the General Assembly session.

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