

Ambassador Danon Security Council Speech – June 24th, 2020

As Delivered

Thank you, Mr. President,

Since the beginning of the conflict, the Palestinians have chosen rejectionism over realism. They reject the idea of a Jewish state. They do not want a Palestinian state beside a Jewish state but at the expense of a Jewish state.

They rejected the UN partition plan in 1947, and have rejected every Israeli offer for peace since.

In recent decades, they have come to even reject every offer of negotiations.

Instead of working towards peace, they have promoted rejectionism and the glorification of terrorism.

Mr. President,

The decision we face today is between realism and rejectionism.

The reality is that Israel wants peace and security. The Palestinians, unfortunately, time and again, choose rejectionism over any realistic solution.

There are currently significant regional opportunities, most notably President Trump's peace initiative.

It is an important milestone for the region, and it represents a significant opportunity.

As Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has stated, during his White House visit in January this year, Israel has agreed to negotiate peace with the Palestinians on the basis of this peace plan.

Israel will pursue this plan responsibly, and in full cooperation with the United States, while maintaining Israel's peace agreements and strategic interests.

We expect the international community to make it clear to the Palestinians that their refusal to engage will not advance Palestinian interests.

Mr. President,

As the decades have gone by and the conflict has continued, reality has changed. Solutions that may have been relevant many years ago, are no longer realistic. But the Palestinian leadership refuses to accept the consequences of their rejectionism. They have built a false narrative of the conflict and continue to fight for unrealistic solutions that do not include a Jewish state.

Unfortunately, the Palestinian leadership is encouraged to do so by some in the international community, who have chosen to reward the Palestinians' rejectionism and

ignore reality. They have adopted the Palestinian narrative and believe that tried-and-failed solutions from years ago are somehow still relevant.

The truth is that even decades later, some in the international community are still unwilling to admit that the Palestinians were never really interested in a genuine, practical solution to the conflict. Instead of confronting the Palestinian leadership, they have tried to appease them by buying every rotten bill of goods the Palestinians were selling. This approach of blindly accepting the Palestinian narrative and demands has not, and will not, lead to a lasting and sustainable end to the conflict.

Mr. President

There is a strong and undeniable connection between the Jewish people and their historic homeland of Judea and Samaria. This has been true for over three millennia and no Palestinian propaganda can change that.

Through official statements and policies, as well as educational textbooks, the PA tries to erase the Jewish people's ancient claim to the Land of Israel. They wrongfully try to paint Jews as European colonists that must be expelled.

Many in the international community have adopted this false narrative, which stands in complete contradiction to history and international law. Should Israel decide to extend its sovereignty, it would be doing so with respect to areas over which it has always maintained a legitimate historical and legal claim.

Mr. President,

The Bible is the cornerstone of the religions of the estimated 14 million Jews, 1.9 billion Muslims and 2.3 billion Christians around the world. So, let's go back to the Bible. The Bible describes how God said to Abraham, and I quote, Genesis 13:15 “כי את כל הארץ “אשר אתה ראה לך אתגנה ולזרעך עד עולם”, “For all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever.”

After being promised all of the land, Abraham chose to build a home in Hebron, in the heart of Judea.

Mr. President,

The Jewish claim to the Land of Israel is also rooted in history.

Ever since Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt, through the Sinai desert and to the land of Israel, returning to the land that God had promised Abraham, Jews have lived and exercised sovereignty in the Promised Land. Even when the Romans destroyed the Second Temple in 70 CE, and the Jews were exiled from their home, Jewish communities survived in Jerusalem and elsewhere in our homeland.

Historic artifacts are scattered across our land and around the world, including right outside the Security Council chamber, attesting to the Jewish connection to the land.

On the Arch of Titus in Rome, one can find “The spoils of Jerusalem”, an image of Roman soldiers carrying the spoils they took from the Holy Jewish Temple as they exiled Jews from their home. These artifacts are not fifty or a hundred years old, but thousands of years old. So, too, is our history in the land of Israel. And throughout that time in the Diaspora, the Jewish people never once relinquished our claim to our homeland.

The story of the Jews returning to the Land of Israel in the late 19th century to join their brothers and sisters, who had never left, is not a story of a foreign people colonizing a foreign land, but one of a native people reuniting in their ancient homeland.

Mr. President,

Long before the founding of the Palestinian Authority and its propaganda machine, the international community recognized the rights of the Jewish people to their land. And I heard my colleague from Germany speaking of international law.

In the 1917 Balfour Declaration, the British stated their objective of achieving, and I quote: “the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.” That national home included the entire Land of Israel, including Judea and Samaria.

During the San Remo Conference, which formed the basis for the League of Nations mandate system, the allies adopted Britain’s Balfour Declaration. In 1922, the League of Nations designated the land west of the Jordan River in its entirety to be the territory allotted to a Jewish homeland.

In 1945 the UN charter, its founding document, was signed. Article 80(1) of the Charter specifies that, and I quote: “nothing in this Chapter shall be construed in or of itself to alter in any manner the rights whatsoever of any states or any peoples or the terms of existing international instruments to which Members of the United Nations may respectively be parties.”

In other words, the League of Nation's recognition of the right of the Jewish people to a state in their homeland, was embraced once again in one of the main sources of international law, the United Nations charter.

Mr. President,

Those who oppose Israel’s legal claims to this territory, also wrongly mischaracterize any potential Israeli decision to extend its sovereignty to this territory as so-called “annexation.” These objections result from embracing a Palestinian false narrative, rather than an assessment of the historical and legal facts.

Let’s be honest and clear: the PLO is not, and never was, a state, and has never been the sovereign in this territory. Never.

Mr. President,

Another objection we hear is that applying sovereignty will harm regional stability. We have heard this argument many times before.

In 1948, before Israel declared its independence, we were warned not to do so because the response would mean the end of the dream of a Jewish homeland.

In 1967, after the Six Day War and the liberation of Jerusalem, Israel was warned of the repercussions of extending sovereignty to the united city of Jerusalem.

In 1981, despite opposition similar to what we hear today, Prime Minister Begin declared the application of Israeli law in the Golan Heights and assured Israel's ability to protect herself from many threats in the region.

Even as recently, all of us were in the chamber in the Security Council in 2018, when the US moved its Embassy to Jerusalem, we were warned of the danger it would pose to the stability of the region.

Israel will continue to promote her important interests, which include a realistic and secure peace between Israel and all its neighbors, and not allow some in the international community to try and intimidate us with threats of violence.

Mr. President,

The final objection is one that we have heard today: that applying sovereignty will end any chance of negotiations. And I ask: what negotiations? Where are the negotiations? Instead of speaking with us directly, Minister Maliki is coming to the UN Security Council. Why can we not meet in Ramallah, or in Jerusalem?

Israel has repeatedly invited the PA to the negotiating table. In the few times where they even replied to the invitation, it was only to reject it.

President Abbas has refused every deal that has been offered to him. He even condemned President Trump's peace plan before it had been published.

Blaming Israel for the lack of negotiations is not only wrong, it is destructive to peace. By blaming Israel, you actually arm President Abbas with the last in a long line of excuses not to come to the negotiating table. A solution can come only through direct negotiations between the parties.

Mr. President,

The discussion over the extension of Israeli sovereignty to certain areas in Judea and Samaria does not stand in the way of peace. What stands in the way of peace is Palestinian rejectionism and the encouragement that they get from some in the international community.

It is time that the Palestinians realize that rejectionism is a losing strategy. It is time that international community chooses realism over rejectionism.

Thank you, Mr. President.