US was Planning to Abstain From UN Anti-Settlements Vote — Report

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The United States was planning to abstain from Thursday’s vote on an Egyptian-drafted resolution at the United Nations Security Council condemning Israeli settlements, [according to NBC News](http://www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/trump-calls-obama-veto-un-settlement-resolution-n699036).

Sources confirmed to the TV network the US was planning to forgo its veto and allow the vote to take place before Egypt’s President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi pulled out and asked for a delay, reportedly under Israeli diplomatic pressure.

The resolution, which demanded that Israel immediately halt its settlement activities in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, was scheduled to be brought to a vote on Thursday afternoon.

United States Secretary of State John Kerry was planning a major address to lay out the US reasoning and vision for taking such a stance, which would have been a departure from longstanding US policy to veto one-sided resolutions at the international body targeting Israel, the TV report said.

Several diplomats and Western officials said the Egyptians postponed the vote due to pressure from the Israelis. Egypt, the first Arab country to make peace with Israel, was meeting with Arab League diplomats later Thursday to review the text. Diplomats said there was no time frame for when the vote may now occur and said it could be put off indefinitely.

Just before the delay was announced, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called on the US to veto the resolution. In a video statement, the Israeli prime minister implored the Obama administration to “stand up in the UN and veto anti-Israel resolutions,” designating that position “one of the great pillars of the US-Israel alliance.”

“I hope the US won’t abandon this policy,” he said. “I hope it will abide by the principles set by President Obama himself in his speech in the UN in 2011: That peace will come not through UN resolutions, but only through direct negotiations between the parties. And that’s why this proposed resolution is bad. It’s bad for Israel; it’s bad for the United States and it’s bad for peace.”

Earlier in the day, President-elect Donald Trump also weighed in, calling the resolution “extremely unfair” to Israelis.

“As the United States has long maintained, peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians will only come through direct negotiations between the parties, and not through the imposition of terms by the United Nations,” he said on Facebook.

If the resolution were passed, it would put “Israel in a very poor negotiating position and is extremely unfair to all Israelis,” he added.

The UN [draft resolution submitted by Cairo](http://www.timesofisrael.com/full-text-of-draft-un-security-council-resolution-demanding-israel-cease-all-settlement-activities/) called on Israel to “immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem.”

It further expressed “grave concern that continuing Israeli settlement activities are dangerously imperiling the viability of the two-state solution,” and called on all states “to distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967,” which some analysts say invites boycotts of Israeli settlements goods.

The draft also condemned “all acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terror, as well as all acts of provocation, incitement and destruction,” which some in the international community understand as turning the resolution into a “balanced” text.

The US vetoed a similar resolution at the United Nations in 2011.