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# Joe Walsh To Palestinians: Stop Statehood Bid Or Israel Will Annex West Bank

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NEW YORK -- A Republican lawmaker has introduced a resolution warning Palestinian leaders that Israel would be within its rights to annex the West Bank if they do not drop their bid for statehood at the United Nations this week.

Rep. Joe Walsh (R-Ill.) introduced the resolution as a way of urging Palestinian leaders to pull back from their plans to seek formal recognition for their state at the U.N. General Assembly meetings, which take place this week, according to his spokesman, Justin Roth.

"The intent is to explain to the Palestinians that actions have consequences," Roth told The Huffington Post. "A major tenet of the Oslo Accords is that the parties at least continue to negotiate in good faith and don't do anything involving the international community without each other."

Roth said that 30 other congressmen have signed on to the resolution.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and a large delegation of State Department officials are already in New York on the eve of the high-level meetings, consulting with heads of state and urging them to help rebuff the Palestinian plan.

But Walsh has not been satisfied with the Obama administration's seriousness in heading off the statehood bid, according to Roth.

"He doesn't think the administration's been forceful enough in telling the Palestinians that this is unacceptable," Roth said. "Privately and through back channels, maybe they've made their

opinion known, but a loud and clear statement from the president would make a much stronger impact."

The Walsh resolution represents the harshest rhetoric yet in a steadily building -- and bipartisan -- flow of congressional dismay over the statehood initiative, which Palestinian leaders have pledged to introduce at the end of the week.

Last week, nearly 60 House Democrats joined Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) in calling for European heads of state to oppose the statehood initiative alongside the United States.

Meanwhile, several congressmen have introduced or supported legislation that would strip the Palestinian Authority of U.S. funding if the statehood initiative goes through, while a tougher bill -- sponsored by Reps. Steve Israel (D-N.Y.), Steve Rothman (D-N.J.), Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.) and Robert Brady (D-Pa.) -- would block funding to any country that votes with the Palestinians.

The tough legislation appears to clash with the recommendations of even some of Israel's strongest allies.

At a recent House hearing on funding for the Palestinian Authority, former Bush administration official Eliot Abrams, a staunch supporter of Israel, argued against suspending aid in the event of a U.N. vote this week.

"I would say the best response is not to zero out all aid to the PA," Abrams said. "Some programs are very much in our own interest and Israel's, such as the security programs. Defunding them right now would make life harder for Israelis and Palestinians alike."

Earlier, Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi, the president of The Israel Project, made a similar case to Reuters, saying, "We have made the case that the security cooperation, which is largely funded and supported by America, needs to continue if we want to see the progress ... in reducing terrorism continue."

In New York, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton expressed optimism that a solution to the impasse might be reached before the week's end.

"We are engaged in extremely intensive ongoing diplomacy, reaching out to not only the parties, but to all of the people who are here for the UN General Assembly," Clinton told reporters. "It's early in the week. A lot of people are not even here yet."

Earlier in the day, Clinton met with Turkish foreign minister Ahmet Davutoglu for an hour-long meeting that included some discussion of the Palestinian statehood initiative, which Turkey has pledged to support.

"The Palestinian issue," a senior State Department official said in a briefing after that meeting, is "obviously looming large here at the U.N."

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