



House Passes Resolutions Disapproving the UNSC Resolution on Israeli Settlements

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On January 5, 2017, the US House of Representatives, by a [vote](#) of 342-80, passed [HRes11](#), a non-binding resolution objecting to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2334 as an obstacle to Israeli-Palestinian peace. HRes11 was introduced on January 3 by House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce (R-California) and ranking member Eliot Engel (D-New York). Two-hundred and thirty-three Republicans and 109 Democrats voted for the resolution; four Republicans and 76 Democrats voted against the resolution. The resolution puts the House of Representatives on the record as opposing UNSC 2334 and calls for the “anti-Israel” measure to be repealed or altered. The resolution also reaffirms congressional support for the two-state solution.

Meanwhile, Representative Dennis Ross (R-Florida) and a group of hard-line pro-Israel supporters re-introduced [HRes14](#) (originally HRes957, introduced in the closing days of the 114th Congress), which omits any mention of supporting a two-state solution. Ross’s resolution is not expected to be considered. Ross is the House Deputy Majority Whip and a member of President-elect Trump’s transition team.

The resolution passed with strong bipartisan support. Still, the number of Democrats who voted against it is noteworthy. During the Obama Administration there has been a growing debate, and some say a split, within the Democratic Party over how forcefully to pressure Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu to cease settlement building in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. US policy has long held that the settlements are an “obstacle to peace.”

House Floor Debate

The debate on the rule governing debate on HRes11 turned rancorous when Representative Jim McGovern (D-Massachusetts) objected to the Rules Committee decision not to allow amendments to HRes11 by calling for a “closed” rule. (Note: Before a measure can be considered on the House floor, it is considered by the Rules Committee which determines how the bill will be debated. A closed rule prohibits any amendment to the underlying legislation.)

Representatives David Price (D-North Carolina), Eliot Engel (D-New York), and Gerry Connolly (D-Virginia) wanted an amendment that stated HRes11 misrepresents the motive of President Obama in abstaining on the UNSC Resolution 2334, distorts the content of the UNSC

resolution, and undermines congressional credibility. McGovern accused the Rules Committee of using Putin-like tactics by blocking any amendments to HRes11 and depriving supporters of the Price-Engel-Connolly amendment of the opportunity to offer more reasonable language that accurately reflected President Obama's decision to abstain. Several members took the floor to announce their opposition to HRes11 and support for the Price-Engel-Connolly amendment, including Representatives Connolly, Lloyd Doggett (D-Texas), Earl Blumenauer (D-Oregon), Peter Welch (D-Vermont), and Barbara Lee (D-California).

Senate Resolution Introduced

In the Senate, Senators Ben Cardin (D-Maryland) and Marco Rubio (R-Florida) introduced a similar resolution, [SRes6](#), on January 4, expressing grave opposition to UNSCR 2334. Like the House resolution, the Cardin-Rubio resolution calls for the repeal or alteration of UNSC 2334. SRes6 reiterates that the United States will continue to seek a sustainable, just, and secure two-state solution and calls on the Trump Administration to facilitate the resumption of direct and bilateral negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians.

The Senate has not yet acted on SRes6 as it has been focused this week on passing the budget resolution. On January 6, the Senate will meet jointly with the House to count the electoral votes. Therefore, consideration of SRes6 will be put off until the following week.

Senators who cosponsored the resolution are Mitch McConnell (R-Kentucky), Chuck Schumer (D-New York), Michael Bennet (D-Colorado), Richard Blumenthal (D-Connecticut), Bob Casey (D-Pennsylvania), Chris Coons (D-Delaware), John Cornyn (R-Texas), Tom Cotton (R-Arkansas), Joe Donnelly (D-Indiana), Joni Ernst (R-Iowa), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-New York), Lindsey Graham (R-South Carolina), Dean Heller (R-Nevada), John McCain (R-Arizona), Bob Menendez (D-New Jersey), Jerry Moran (R-Kansas), Bill Nelson (D-Florida), Rob Portman (R-Ohio), Debbie Stabenow (D-Michigan), and Todd Young (R-Indiana).

Senator Jerry Moran (R-Kansas) also has introduced his own resolution (SRes5) regarding Israel and the United Nations. The Ross resolution does not mention the two-state solution. The Senate is not expected to consider this resolution.

It is important to note that House Resolutions (HRes) and Senate Resolutions (SRes) are simple non-binding resolutions and do not have the force of law. Simple resolutions are not signed by the president. They do, however, express the sense of Congress on a particular issue, or, in this case, the UN Security Council vote and congressional support for Israel.