



The U.S. vetoed a draft resolution in the United Nations Security Council that would have declared Israel's settlement construction in the West Bank and East Jerusalem to be illegal and demanded a halt to such activity.

The U.S., while "rejecting in the strongest terms the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlement activity," voted against the measure out of concern for the impact on the future of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, Ambassador Susan Rice said.

The Obama administration sought until the final hours before the vote to reach agreement with Arab diplomats on a compromise statement that would have increased pressure on Israel to cease settlement construction, while stopping short of calling it illegal or demanding a moratorium.

The Palestinian Authority rejected the proposal earlier in the day and notified U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, according to a statement from the office of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

The U.S. was alone in opposing the measure on the 15- member council, the UN's principal policy-making panel. It was the administration's first veto of a UN resolution and marked the 10th time in the past 11 years that the U.S. has voted against a text considered to be critical of Israel.

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