

U.S. Senate passes resolution threatening to suspend aid to Palestinians

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Resolution 185 calls on Palestinians to halt bid for unilateral recognition at UN, calls on Obama to veto the vote in September.

The United States Senate has passed a resolution threatening to suspend financial assistance to the Palestinian Authority if its leaders “persist in efforts to circumvent direct negotiations by turning to the United Nations or other international bodies,” and called on U.S. President Barack Obama to veto a UN vote on unilateral recognition of a Palestinian state.

“Palestinian efforts to gain recognition of a state outside direct negotiations demonstrates absence of a good faith commitment to peace negotiations, and will have implications for continued United States aid,” the resolution declares.

Senator Ben Cardin, who initiated the resolution along with Senator Susan Collins, said after the vote late Tuesday that “The Senate has delivered a clear message to the international community that United Nations recognition of a Palestinian state at this time does not further the peace process.”

Resolution 185, co-sponsored by 87 Senator, states the two-state solution as the official U.S. policy for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and also calls for a review of the reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas.

It also calls for the Palestinian unity government to “publicly and formally forswear terrorism, accept Israel’s right to exist, and reaffirm previous agreements made with the Government of Israel.”

The Senate also called on Obama to announce that the U.S. will veto any resolution on Palestinian statehood that comes before the UN Security Council which is not a result of a peace agreement – and asked him to “lead a diplomatic effort to oppose a unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state and to oppose recognition of a Palestinian state by other nations”.

AIPAC, which lobbied for the passage of the resolution, welcomed the vote’s result.

Critics of the measure stressed that by cutting financial aid, the U.S. might lose leverage over the Palestinians and might invite other, less constructive players, into the game, as they have already lost faith in the U.S. as an impartial mediator.

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