

U.S. Warns Palestinians Against Bid for Full UN Membership

By Barak Ravid

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The Biden administration has urged the Palestinian Authority not to pursue a vote at the UN Security Council on gaining full UN membership, stressing it will likely veto any such move, U.S. and Palestinian sources said.

Driving the news: The Palestinian Authority announced several weeks ago it will renew its push to gain full UN membership during the upcoming UN General Assembly meeting in New York.

- Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas wants to use this move to try to put the Israeli-Palestinian conflict back at the center of the international community's attention and to break the current deadlock in the peace process.
- The possible UN bid is also a way for the PA and Abbas to try to win points domestically and get deliverables from the U.S. and the EU.

Behind the scenes: Several weeks ago, Palestinian Ambassador to the UN Riyad Mansour started quiet consultations in New York with Security Council members over a possible full membership bid, according to Palestinian, Israeli and U.S. sources.

The Palestinians also discussed the issue with Biden administration officials, who raised strong reservations and said such a move won't lead anywhere because of the veto, U.S. sources said.

Flashback: In November 2012, the Palestinians' UN status was upgraded to non-member observer state, but this was done through a vote at the UN General Assembly where no country has veto power.

 Since then, Palestinian leaders tried several times to get a vote at the UN Security Council but never garnered enough support — nine of 15 members — to even hold a vote. What they're saying: PLO official and Palestinian Minister Hussein al-Sheikh confirmed there were talks with the Biden administration on the issue, but stressed that it is an ongoing discussion and the PA is still trying to convince countries to support it.

- A State Department spokesperson said the U.S. is committed to a two-state solution and is focused on trying to bring the Palestinians and Israelis closer together and create conditions for direct talks.
- "The only realistic path to a comprehensive and lasting peace is through direct negotiations between the parties. There are no shortcuts to Palestinian statehood outside direct negotiations with Israel," the State Department spokesperson added.

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