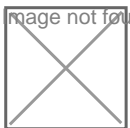# Netanyahu urges Washington to recognize Israel's annexation of Golan

Jerusalem, January 8 (RHC)-- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has asked a visiting senior aide to U.S. President Donald Trump to recognize Syria's Golan Heights as Israeli territory.

"The Golan Heights is tremendously important for our security," Netanyahu told U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton, during a joint statement after their meeting in Jerusalem.

Netanyahu said he was planning to take the Trump adviser on a tour of the occupied Golan Heights. "When you're there, you'll be able to understand perfectly why we'll never leave the Golan Heights and why it's important that all countries recognize Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights," Netanyahu said. "I've discussed this with the president, and I hope I have a chance to show it to you directly tomorrow on our visit."

In 1967, the Israeli regime waged a full-scale war against Arab territories, including those of Syria, and occupied a large swathe of Syria's Golan Heights.

In 1973, the Yom Kippur War broke out between the Israeli regime and a coalition of Arab states led by Egypt and Syria.

A year later, a UN-brokered ceasefire came into force, according to which the Israeli regime and the Syrian government agreed to separate their troops, and create a buffer zone patrolled by UN peacekeepers.

In late 1981, Israel passed the Golan Heights Law that extended the regime's "laws, jurisdiction and administration" to the Golan Heights, effectively annexing the territory to Israel.

A few days after the law's passage in Israel's Knesset, UN Security Council Resolution 497 determined the law as "null and void and without international legal effect."

Standing next to Bolton, Netanyahu praised Trump for recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's "capital," for withdrawing from the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement and for supporting the Israeli regime in international forums, saying the Trump administration backed Tel Aviv "both in word and deed."

The United Nations General Assembly overwhelmingly voted in favor of a resolution on the permanent sovereignty of Syria over natural resources of the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights in 2018.

Also on Sunday, Bolton visited the Western Wall and its adjacent tunnels in the old city of Jerusalem in a move that angered the Palestinians.

Accompanying him on the tour of the city were his Israeli counterpart, Meir Ben-Shabbat, Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. Ron Dermer, and U.S. Ambassador to Israel David Friedman.

Since the international community does not recognize Jerusalem as Israeli territory, foreign dignitaries usually avoid having Israeli officials as company when they visit the Western Wall, which is considered as one of the most sacred Jewish sites.

Trump became the first sitting American head of state to visit the Western Wall In May 2017. Later on, he recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital and proceeded to move the US diplomatic mission to the ancient city.
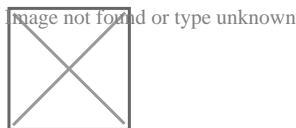
Israel occupied the West Bank and East Jerusalem during the Six-Day War in 1967. It later annexed East Jerusalem in a move not recognized by the international community.

Palestinians want the West Bank as part of a future independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

In other news, U.S. National Security Advisor John Bolton said that U.S. military withdrawal from Syria would happen only after ISIS is defeated and if Turkey would guarantee they would not try to destroy U.S.-trained Syrian Kurdish fighters.

Bolton's comments contradicted Trump's initial announcement from December 19 ordering an immediate withdrawal and declaring that the U.S. had "won against ISIS." At a Cabinet meeting last week, Trump also contradicted his December announcement, stating, "I never said fast or slow." Bolton also said the U.S. would "absolutely assure" the security of Israel and other regional allies.

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