

TRUMP TO UNVEIL HIS WEST ASIA PEACE PLAN

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed & developing countries on India's interests

Talking peace:U.S. President Donald Trump and Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu, right, in Washington.AFPSAUL LOEB

U.S. President Donald Trump on Tuesday proposed creation of a Palestinian state with capital in eastern Jerusalem, dependent on Palestinians taking steps to become self-governing, as part of a peace plan to end decades of conflict in the region.

Senior administration officials said that under Mr. Trump's proposed West Asia peace plan, the U.S. will recognise Israeli settlements on the occupied West Bank.

In exchange, Israel would agree to accept a four-year freeze on new settlement activity while Palestinian statehood is negotiated.

"Today, Israel has taken a giant step toward peace," Mr. Trump said as he announced the plan at the White House with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at his side, saying he also sent a letter about it to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

"This is a historic day," Mr. Netanyahu said, comparing Mr. Trump's peace plan to former President Harry Truman's 1948 recognition of the state of Israel. "On this day, you became the first world leader to recognise Israel's sovereignty over areas in Judea and Samaria that are vital to our security and central to our heritage," he added, using the Biblical names for the West Bank.

Skepticism over deal

The absence of the Palestinians from Mr. Trump's announcement is likely to fuel criticism that the plan tilts toward Israel.

U.S. officials said they were braced for initial Palestinian skepticism but hoped that over time they will agree to negotiate.

Mr. Trump has endorsed a proposed map outlining the two states, the officials said. The Palestinian state would be double the size of land that Palestinians currently control and would be connected by roads, bridges and tunnels, the official said.

Meanwhile, thousands of Palestinians demonstrated in Gaza and Israeli troops reinforced positions near a flashpoint site between the Palestinian city of Ramallah and the Jewish settlement of Beit El in the West Bank.

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