

Ambassador Nikki Haley Has a New (Temporary) Title

U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley earned a new job title on Saturday, albeit a very temporary one.

April 2017 is the United States' turn to hold the rotating presidency of the U.N. Security Council. The job rotates on a monthly basis between the representatives of the 15 members of the council.

The role isn't merely symbolic. As president, Haley will dictate the agenda for the month, organize the meetings, manage the distribution of information to council members, issue statements on behalf of the council and communicate the council's actions to the rest of the world.

As for the agenda—formally known as the “program of work”—for the month of April, the ambassador made it clear what her priorities will be. She said there would be two primary focal points for the Security Council:

The first thematic is going to be focused on U.N. peacekeeping. You've heard me talk about this in terms of the need for peacekeeping reform. I've had numerous conversations with the secretary-general about the need for peacekeeping reform, and the members of the Security Council have very much talked about how they want to see peacekeeping reformed.

So, it is—there is strong consensus on the Security Council that we need to move forward, and the goal is to be effective and efficient through the process and make sure we're actually helping the people we're meant to protect. Going back and looking at the mandates to see if they actually work, what the political solutions are, are the governments working with us in terms of getting the aid to

the people, and how we're going to revise as needed to make sure we're changing with the times ...

The second thematic that we're going to have is in reference to human rights. As president, I strongly believe that if you look at the conflicts that we have in the world, they always go back to the human rights issues on the ground within those countries.

With the Security Council and the idea that they're looking for peace and security for the people around the world, it is incumbent upon us to look at the conflicts and how human rights are related to that conflict.

One might notice the Israeli-Palestinian issue isn't among the two issues she seeks to tackle during her month as president. That's not to say she didn't have something to say about that issue. In fact, she had a lot to say about it, primarily:

So much has been put towards Israel and the Palestinian Authority and not enough has been put towards some of the other issues.

Haley does intend to address the issue of Middle East peace, most notably in an April 20 open debate about Iran's support for terrorism, Syria, and Hezbollah and Hamas. Emphasis on open during that debate—meaning one should expect at least a little bit of fireworks, and even some grandstanding from some Security Council members that tend to be hostile toward Israel.

She also issued some sternly worded warnings for both Israel and the Palestinian Authority. No new settlements in the West Bank and no new Israel-bashing resolutions at the U.N. The goal, she said, is to bring both sides to the negotiating table to have an earnest discussion on a lasting peace proposal. {eo}