

US Brokers a Palestinian-Israeli Agreement

While it's far from the lasting peace agreement President Donald Trump would like to help broker between the Israelis and the Palestinians, Thursday's announcement that the two sides had come to an agreement on water usage rights related to the Red-Dead Sea Conveyance Project was hailed by the White House as a positive first step in that direction.

The Dead Sea is quickly drying out, and much of the Middle East is in dire need of drinking water. With both of those issues in mind, the Red-Dead Sea Conveyance project was developed as a means to provide water to Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority-controlled areas through desalination plants located on the Red Sea, which would discharge brine into the Dead Sea to slow down its demise.

Through the agreement, Israel and the PA agreed to 32 million cubic meters (billion gallons) of water for Judea and Samaria, as well as 10 million cubic meters (billion gallons) for the Gaza Strip. The White House said in a statement the agreement falls under the original Memorandum of Understanding signed by Jordan, Israel and the PA in 2013, which established the construction of a desalination plant in Aqaba on the Red Sea.

With President Trump in France holding meetings the that country's president, Emanuel Macron, the White House issued the following statement regarding the agreement:

Under the leadership of President Donald J. Trump, Special Representative for International Negotiations Jason Greenblatt successfully supported the Israeli and Palestinian efforts to bridge the gaps and reach an agreement on this vital issue. President Trump has made it

clear that working toward achieving a lasting peace agreement between the Israelis and Palestinians is a top priority for him, and he strongly believes that peace is possible.

The administration has urged the parties to undertake efforts to promote an environment that is conducive to advancing peace, and this new agreement, the second major Israeli-Palestinian agreement signed this week, is another indication that the parties are capable of working together to achieve mutually beneficial results. {eoa}