

Rubio Meets with Netanyahu as Trump, Vance Slam Vote on Israeli Annexation of Biblical Heartland

The steady stream of U.S. officials visiting Israel continued with the arrival of Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Thursday, just after Vice President JD Vance left, and Vance was preceded by Trump mediators Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner. Some have wondered why so many visits were crammed into one week, but as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu noted, these are “days of destiny.”

Netanyahu met with Rubio shortly after his arrival.

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The prime minister told Rubio, “This is a circle of trust and partnership. You’ve been an extraordinary friend of Israel, and now we face days of destiny. We want to advance peace; we still have security challenges, but I think that we can work together and, by working together, both address the challenges and seize the opportunities.”

Rubio observed that it was just over a week since the “historic day” in which President Trump’s work led to the “extraordinary” breakthrough, with the release of the 20 living hostages in Gaza.



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“Now, we have more work ahead of us, but we feel very positive about it. We’re making good progress. It’s amazing that in

just seven or eight days, the kinds of things and systems that have been set up," Rubio stated. "No one's under any illusions. This is – we've already done the impossible once, and we intend to keep doing that, and we can, we have good partners that we're working on. But we feel confident and positive about the progress that's being made. We're clear-eyed about the challenges, too."

Rubio believes the Gaza peace deal is Trump's "top priority," evidenced by all the officials he has sent to the region.

"It's a very important achievement, but there's more work to be done and bigger achievements that lie ahead. And so we're here to work on that, and we feel very positive and confident that we're gonna get there despite substantial obstacles. We're gonna get there," Rubio said.

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The secretary of state arrived just after a small number of Knesset members passed the first reading of a bill to extend Israeli sovereignty over biblical Judea and Samaria, also known as the West Bank.

Time Magazine released its interview with President Trump, in which he said Israel won't annex Judea and Samaria. The magazine quoted Trump as saying, "It won't happen because I gave my word to the Arab countries. Israel would lose all of its support from the United States if that happened."

When asked about the Knesset vote, Trump responded, "They're not going to do anything with the West Bank. Don't worry about it. Israel is doing very well. They're not going to do anything with it."

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Netanyahu's office released a statement saying, "The Knesset vote on annexation was a deliberate political provocation by the opposition to sow discord during Vice President JD Vance's visit to Israel. The two bills are sponsored by opposition members of the Knesset."

Vance called the vote "an insult" and declared, "The policy of the Trump administration is that the West Bank will not be annexed by Israel."

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