Trump: Mideast Peace Elusive Because Palestinians are ‘Given So Much’

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US President-elect Donald Trump said his prospects of negotiating an Israeli-Palestinian deal during his presidency have been hampered by the fact that the international community has been “giving so much” to the Palestinians.

Speaking to [The Times of London and Germany’s Bild](http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/full-transcript-of-interview-with-donald-trump-5d39sr09d) just days before his inauguration, Trump further said the December UN Security Council resolution condemning Israeli settlements would only serve to harden Palestinians’ ideological positions in future peace talks.

“The problem I have is that [Resolution 2334] makes it a tougher deal for me to negotiate because the Palestinians are given so much — even though it’s not legally binding it’s psychologically binding and it makes it much tougher for me to negotiate,” he said. “You understand that? Because people are giving away chips, they’re giving away all these chips.”

But, Trump went on to say, if anyone could broker an elusive Israeli-Palestinian peace deal, it would be his Jewish son-in-law, Jared Kushner.

“Jared is such a good lad, he will secure an Israel deal which no one else has managed to get. You know, he’s a natural talent, he is the top, he is a natural talent,” he said.

Last week, Trump named Kushner as a senior adviser in his administration, apparently skirting anti-nepotism regulations.

“You know what I’m talking about — a natural talent. He has an innate ability to make deals, everyone likes him,” he said of Kushner.

Trump said his daughter Ivanka, Kushner’s wife, would play no role in his administration as she “has the kids” and was busy buying a house in Washington, DC.

During the interview, Trump leveled harsh criticism at outgoing President Barack Obama’s policies toward Israel, calling the US abstention from the vote on December 23’s Security Council Resolution 2334 “just terrible.”

He urged the UK to veto any new resolutions critical of Israel, because “I’m not sure if the US would do so — extraordinarily enough.

“They won’t do it, right? Do you believe the US will place a veto? I have Jewish friends who organized a donor event for Obama. I say to them, ‘What on earth are you doing? Okay — what are you doing?’”

Trump declined to answer whether he would implement a contentious campaign promise to move the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, a move that Palestinians have warned will inflame tensions with Israel and the West.

“I’m not going to comment on that. But we’ll see,” Trump said.

The incoming US president also weighed in on European policy issues, and called German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s open door policy to refugees a “catastrophic mistake” that would ultimately lead to more jihadist attacks in the country.

Trump claimed Europe’s refugee policy, spearheaded by Germany, was responsible for Britain’s surprise referendum vote to leave the EU.

“If they hadn’t been forced to take in all of the refugees, so many, with all the problems that it, you know, entails, I think that you wouldn’t have a Brexit,” he said.

The Bild and London Times interviews were published the same day as 70 nations met for the Middle East peace conference in Paris, which called for a negotiated two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The Paris conference was mainly symbolic, but came at a crucial juncture for the Middle East, five days before Trump, who has vowed unstinting support for Israel, takes office.

At the conference, French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault warned Trump there would be extremely serious consequences” if he implemented his promise to move the US embassy to Jerusalem.