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Ya'alon to US: No chance for deal

• By GIL HOFFMAN

All attempts to reach an agreement between Israel and the Palestinians are doomed to failure, former defense minister Moshe Ya'alon warned the Trump administration on Wednesday.

Ya'alon spoke at the Herzliya Conference, while US President Donald Trump advisers Jared Kushner and Jason Greenblatt were in Israel and the Palestinian Authority for shuttle diplomacy between Israeli and Palestinian leaders.

"If the Americans would ask me, I would say they still have to be a global policeman," Ya'alon said. "There are signs they are more proactive in the region, which is positive. But we should tell them that on the Palestinian front, there no chance for permanent agreement or even a temporary agreement."

The American administration should manage conflicts in the Middle East rather than look for a solution, he said.

Ya'alon also criticized the Right, saying that demographics must be taken into account when decisions are made. He said he opposed annexing Area C in the West Bank that is under full Israeli control, and he favored seeking separation from the Palestinians.

The former defense minister, who was a constant critic of former US secretary of state John Kerry, spoke less negatively about Trump.

"There are positive signs that the Trump administration has different policies than its predecessor," he said. "The Trump administration did not concede on redlines in Syria, and there are American strikes against Syrian Army targets."

Ya'alon expressed optimism

that the Trump administration would handle Iran better than former US president Barack Obama. He spoke optimistically about Israel's security situation.

"There is currently no existential threat to Israel," he said. "We currently don't have any struggle with the Sunni camp, with which we have mutual enemies like Iran. Hamas hasn't fired a shot in three years. ISIS is weakened. But there are still challenges from Gaza that has become Hamastan, jihadist groups and Iran."

Fellow former minister Gideon Sa'ar spoke against a regional approach to solving the conflict in his speech to the conference. He warned that the Arab countries involved in the process would take the Palestinians' side and pressure Israel.

"This regional process is against Israel's interests," he



FORMER DEFENSE MINISTER Moshe Ya'alon address the Herzliya Conference yesterday. (IDC)

said. "The words regional diplomatic approach are not magic."

Sa'ar warned that the Palestinians would refuse to give up security control over their residents and over who enters a

prospective Palestinian state.

"A Palestinian state in Judea and Samaria will not solve a problem," he said. "A Palestinian state would only create a problem."