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From: Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>
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From: Rudnitski, Jennine R
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(Jerusalem Post) Prime Minister Netanyahu met with Likud MKs and deputy ministers to discuss the U.S. proposal for a 90-day construction freeze, November 21. In the meeting, Netanyahu told the Likud officials: "I have a responsibility that includes making the best decision for the state of Israel and its national interests, foremost, its security." He continued, "We still haven't received the written agreement from the Americans on the basic understandings." The prime minister assured those attending the meeting, "If we receive a written agreement, I will bring it to the cabinet and I am sure that the ministers will approve it because it is what's best for the state of Israel." He added, "If we don't receive such a document, I won't bring the issue [of a freeze] to the cabinet."

Earlier in the day thousands of settlers protested outside the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem against the potential freeze. National Infrastructures Minister Uzi Landau, an opponent of an additional freeze, addressed the demonstrators. Dozens of youngsters also blocked the entrance to Jerusalem. Police dispersed the protesters and arrested two people. Over the weekend, Kadima MK Avi Dichter told *The Jerusalem Post*, "The total freeze for 10 months was a serious mistake," said Dichter. "It was clear that it would come to an end, and that in those 10 months nothing dramatic could happen between Israel and the Palestinians – leaving us in the same situation as at the beginning."

"Netanyahu made a second mistake when he didn't agree to the American request to extend a two-month freeze immediately on September 26, and insist that it was the last freeze. If he had, we'd be one week away from the end, rather than in our current state," he said. Dichter said the "main problem is that the topic of the freeze has become the central topic of discussion, rather than talks between us and the Palestinians."