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Subject: Netanyahu says will address U.N. next week (Reuters)

JERUSALEM (Reuters) - Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Thursday he would address the United Nations next week and urge Palestinians to negotiate peace with Israel rather than pursue a bid for full U.N. membership for a Palestinian state.

"I have decided to convey these twin messages of direct negotiations for peace and the quest for peace," Netanyahu told reporters. "I've decided to take this message to the U.N. General Assembly when I speak there next week."

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas vowed on Wednesday "no retreat" from plans to request full U.N. membership in the absence of talks with Israel, which were frozen a year ago in a dispute over settlement building in the occupied West Bank.

Washington has said it would veto such a move in the Security Council, arguing that creation of a Palestinian state should be the result of peace negotiations with Israel.

U.S. and European envoys are in the region for talks with Israeli and Palestinian leaders in a last-minute diplomatic push to avert a U.N. showdown and keep peace hopes alive.

Abbas is due to speak to the General Assembly on Sept 23.

An aide to Netanyahu said the prime minister also would address the forum that day and that efforts were under way to try to arrange meetings with U.S. President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

"It's not an especially supporting forum for the State of Israel. It's not a forum in which we will get applause," Netanyahu said about the General Assembly. "But I think that in this forum too it is important that the prime minister of Israel turn up and state things as they are."

Anticipating a U.S. veto in the Security Council, the only U.N. body that can approve full membership, Palestinian officials have indicated they would seek instead a resolution in the General Assembly that would upgrade Palestinian status to a "non-member state" from an "entity".

Abbas has said such an upgrade would give the Palestinians access to the International Criminal Court and International Court of Justice. Israel fears Palestinians could pursue cases against it in those organisations.

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