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Subject: PM: Conflict continues due to refusal to accept Israel (Jerusalem Post)

JERUSALEM (Jerusalem Post) - The root of the Israeli-Arab conflict is not Israel's presence in the settlements, but rather its presence in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu said December 30. Netanyahu, speaking at the Foreign Ministry's annual meeting of the country's ambassadors and consul generals in Jerusalem, said that "peace cannot be based on lies. This conflict continues because there is a refusal to recognize Israel as a Jewish state and bring an end to the conflict." Peace, Netanyahu said, will require the Palestinians to "give up their right of return, because it is impossible to have a Jewish state and in parallel to flood it with Palestinian refugees." Speaking at the same forum where five days earlier Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman said that the current PA government was illegitimate and that the Israeli government had too many "coalition contradictions" to present a clear diplomatic program, Netanyahu said his government "seeks peace." "This is the target and the goal," he said, saying that the Palestinians were the ones unwilling to negotiate. Israel, he said, was ready last month to accede to a US request for an additional three-month settlement freeze, but that Washington concluded that this would not help the negotiations, because the PA would continue demanding more moratoriums when that one had expired. Many countries in the world, Netanyahu said, perceive Israel as "guilty until it proves otherwise." He said Israel would "use all the resources at its disposal" to go on the offensive, fight the delegitimization campaign, and "delegitimize the delegitimizers."