



February 29, 2012

Dear President Obama:

Next week you will be meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and addressing an AIPAC audience in Washington, D.C. We recognize that while your Administration continues to work to prevent a catastrophic breakdown in Israeli-Palestinian relations, right now it is unrealistic to expect any dramatic initiative to try to break the Israeli-Palestinian deadlock. However, we urge you to use these occasions to reiterate your commitment to the achievement of Israeli-Palestinian peace and the two-state solution, and to hold firm in the sensible, pragmatic positions on this issue that you have already laid out – positions that are pro-Israel and pro-peace, and consistent with America's own interests.

In this regard, we urge you not to give in to those who, for reasons of ideology or political expediency, counsel you to “walk back” longstanding U.S. positions regarding Israeli-Palestinian peace. Love for Israel does not require you to renege on your commitment to peace based on the only realistic formula that exists. That formula, accepted by most American Jews and Israelis, is two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side with borders based on the 1967 lines. Likewise, solidarity with Israel in its fight to preserve its existence as a democracy and a Jewish state demands continued U.S. opposition to settlements, while support for Israel must not be conflated with sacrificing the longstanding, principled U.S. position that the status of Jerusalem will only be determined through negotiations.

Likewise, we urge you not to give in to those who, for reasons of ideology or political expediency, want you to commit the United States to precipitous military action on Iran. Clearly, there is no easy path forward on Iran, but any discourse about war must be a sober one, weighing all options – including the option of re-committing to serious, sustained engagement – and taking into account the full range of possible consequences. It must be a discourse in which the voices of reason and wisdom from America's (and Israel's) own military and intelligence communities are not marginalized in favor of the kind of dangerous ideologues and fantasists who made the case for war in Iraq.

Mr. President, over the past three years you have demonstrated, over and over, your support for and solidarity with Israel, even as the government of Israel has acted to thwart your peace efforts and to undermine its own interests. No one can honestly doubt your pro-Israel credentials or your deeply-held commitment to Israel's security.

In the often overwrought and exceptionally partisan political atmosphere that characterizes the U.S. political atmosphere at this juncture, we urge you to now hold firm to your core positions. We urge you to refuse to give in to those who demand that you apologize for your past peace efforts, to refuse to distance yourself from the reasonable, pro-Israel, pro-U.S. positions you have previously articulated, and to refuse to adopt new positions that are anathema to the interests of both the U.S. and Israel.

Sincerely,

Martin Bresler
Chairman

Debra DeLee
President & CEO

