

FEINSTEIN LETTER

March XX, 2013

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to commend you for your decision to visit Israel and the Palestinian Authority later this month. We urge you to take this opportunity to reiterate your commitment to the security of Israel and the negotiation of a two-state peace agreement to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict during your presidency.

The U.S.-Israeli relationship – based on shared values of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law – has never been stronger. We have worked closely together on intelligence and security matters and, with your support, Congress has provided vital assistance to Israel including funds to support the Iron Dome missile defense system.

Yet, significant challenges remain in the region. Hamas and Hezbollah –terrorist organizations committed to Israel’s destruction – have received more sophisticated arms. Iran continues its pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability which would pose an existential threat to Israel. The ultimate outcome of the Arab Spring is uncertain and violence and instability endures in Syria. In light of these threats, we urge you to underscore your personal commitment to Israel’s security and to send a clear message to the Israeli people that the United States stands with them.

Just as the United States is unwavering in its support for Israel during these difficult times, we should also be clear about our commitment to a permanent, two-state peace agreement to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For 20 years, American Presidents and Israeli Prime Ministers as well as majorities of both Israelis and Palestinians have supported this goal because ending the conflict is vital to the interests of all parties and peace and stability in the region. In particular, we agree with you that a peace agreement establishing two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security is necessary to ensure that Israel remains a Jewish, democratic state.

That is why it is essential for you to reaffirm on your upcoming trip that finding a pathway to peace remains a priority for your administration. You will find strong support in the Senate for a sustained, U.S. diplomatic initiative to help both parties conclude an agreement. Ultimately, it is up to the Israelis and the Palestinians to make the difficult choices to achieve peace, yet the United States remains indispensable to any viable effort to achieve that goal.

We appreciate your attention to this letter and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,