

Cohen-Yarmouth-Connolly, March 2011

Mr. President:

We write to unambiguously affirm the United States Congress' strong support for active American leadership toward achieving a two-state resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Arab conflicts.

This is a time of great uncertainty and risk for our ally Israel. We share its deep fears about the prospect of Iran acquiring nuclear weapons. We have serious concerns about the possible emergence of a Palestinian government which includes officials who do not recognize the Quartet Principles. And we are outraged by terrorist attacks and hateful rhetoric against Israel and its people around the world. In the face of these challenges, it is crucial for the United States to be unwavering in word and deed in our historically bipartisan support of Israel's security and legitimacy.

In our view, support for a two-state resolution is inseparable from such support for Israel, its special relationship with the United States, and its very survival as a democratic homeland for the Jewish people. As Israeli President Shimon Peres said a few weeks ago, "The principle of the two-state solution is a paramount Israeli interest." Our government, under Democratic and Republican administrations alike, has sought the emergence of a Palestinian state living alongside Israel in peace and security as an essential element of the United States' unbreakable commitment to our ally.

Unfortunately, broad American political support for the two-state resolution is under serious attack in the increasingly polarized political environment. In recent months, some on the national political stage have argued that the United States should not play a lead role in the peace process, even denying the existence of the Palestinian people.

Far from undermining Israel's enemies, such rhetoric empowers them, and threatens Israel's long-term security and survival. Such wavering on the two-state resolution helps the growing number of those calling for a "one-state solution" under which Jews would soon become a minority in their own historic homeland, destroying the Zionist dream. At the same time, U.S. equivocation on support for the emergence of a Palestinian state emboldens violent extremists who feed off of the false belief that peace is not possible.

Accordingly, Israel cannot afford an absence or diminution of U.S. leadership in the urgent quest for peace. No mistake should be made: those who question whether our country should continue to push for a two state resolution do so at the expense of Israel's long-term survival.

We look forward to continuing to work with you toward the urgent goal of a two-state resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Arab conflicts.

Sincerely,