

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We thank you for your Administration's strong and active support for a two-state resolution to the decades-old Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We recognize that the consequences of this conflict directly affect American national security interests. We commend Secretary Kerry for his tireless efforts in moving the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations forward over the past several months.

We must not be drawn into an unproductive and politically charged blame game, but instead chart a course out of the current impasse. Both Ambassador Martin Indyk and Minister Tzipi Livni – the chief US and Israeli negotiators, respectively – have recently made clear that neither party is wholly to blame for the inability to reach an agreement or to extend talks beyond the initial April 29th deadline. While negotiations are paused, the United States must caution against unhelpful unilateral actions by either party which would impede a negotiated two-state resolution.

Most immediately, we share your Administration's concern regarding the agreement between Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Hamas, a designated foreign terrorist organization. We believe that the United States must carefully examine the composition and policies of any interim government before moving to alter the United States relationship with the Palestinian government in accordance with US law. It is vital that any Palestinian government fulfill the stated promise of President Abbas that it will continue current policies of recognizing Israel, renouncing violence, and implementing prior agreements.

The formation of an interim Palestinian government is likely to be only one of many challenges encountered during the current impasse. Palestinian approaches to international organizations for full membership could intensify in the absence of meaningful progress toward a two-state solution. At the same time, Israeli settlement activity in the West Bank could, as chief US negotiator Ambassador Martin Indyk [said this month](#), "drive Israel into an irreversible binational reality," which "doesn't just undermine Palestinian trust in the purpose of the negotiations; it can undermine Israel's Jewish future."

Real progress toward a negotiated resolution – not merely the resumption of negotiations for negotiations' sake – will require continued American engagement and international leadership. Like you, we believe that only the parties themselves can ultimately decide the time and terms to end their conflict, but we also believe that success is far more likely to be achieved with active United States engagement to help bridge the differences between the parties.

With the parties approaching what Secretary Kerry has described as a precipice, now is the time to provide them with a way over the divide.

Sincerely,

Lloyd Doggett
Rush Holt

David Price
Earl Blumenauer