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May 13, 2009

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington DC 20001

Dear Mr. President,

There is a broad consensus within the American Jewish community and among policymakers in support of an active US role in assisting the Israelis and the Palestinians to establish a two-state solution. We believe that this formula both advances America's interests in the entire Middle East and is the best achievable means of ensuring Israel's survival as a Jewish state and a democracy.

Accordingly, we are in full support of the actions taken by your Administration during its first 100 days in office. They are evidence of your determination to achieve a two-state solution and exceed the reasonable expectations of those of us who long for a secure Jewish homeland at peace with its neighbors.

The contours of the two-state solution have been known for more than a decade and blueprints for getting there have been laid out numerous times. However, we do not underestimate the challenges impeding progress toward the two-state goal.

We believe that the present moment is increasingly propitious for diplomatic action. Your election, and your first months in office, have captured the attention of the entire world – including the peoples of the Middle East – giving you latitude that few, if any, of your recent predecessors had. The moment of opportunity is here and the stakes are too high for the United States to allow any more time to be wasted.

We believe that the coming weeks will be critical and we urge you to ask the regional leaders you meet with this month to do their respective parts toward achieving these five achievable goals:

1. an immediate renewal of US-mediated Israeli-Palestinian negotiations toward the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel;
2. the cessation of Palestinian terror attacks on Israelis and of weapons smuggling into Gaza, and an increase in the number of American-trained Palestinian security forces in the West Bank;
3. a freeze on West Bank settlement construction, the dismantling of superfluous checkpoints and illegal settlements, and the cessation of demolitions of Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem;
4. the immediate reconstruction of Gaza with a focus on civilian needs, and the local economy;
5. the pursuit of a comprehensive peace between Israel and its neighbors, including Syria, using the Arab Peace Initiative as a basis for negotiations.

These ideas are not new. However, they require your conveying them to the parties with a sense of urgency – urgency built on a clear, immovable and lasting commitment to a policy which is in the national interest of the United States, the Palestinian people, the Israeli people and the people of the entire region.

Your bold leadership can rekindle a candle of hope for the two-state solution which has been flickering. We stand with you and will do everything we can to help you achieve this vision for the Middle East.

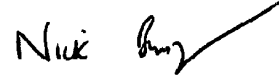
Sincerely,



Peter A. Joseph
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