



January 21, 2013

President Barak Obama
The White House
(via email)

Dear President Obama,

Today you are being sworn in for your second term as the 44th President of the United States of America. We congratulate you on this historic occasion.

As you embark on these next four years at the helm of our great country, you face a Middle East that is in tumult, including a crisis on the Israeli-Palestinian front that demands urgent attention. The stalemate in negotiations, poisonous political trends, and concrete developments on the ground have combined to put the very viability of the two-state solution in question.

We are writing today to emphasize a painful reality: Absent decisive action by your Administration in the short-term, there is a very real chance that the two-state solution will be lost. Lost along with it will be the hopes for a peaceful, secure future for Israelis and Palestinians alike and the viability of Israel as a Jewish state and a democracy. Vital U.S. national security interests, in the region and beyond, will be endangered.

In this context we respectfully offer the following urgent recommendations:

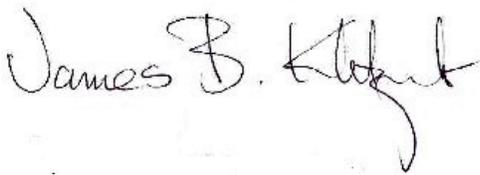
- Articulate your administration's terms of reference for resolving this conflict. Do so unambiguously and unequivocally, and above all, expeditiously.
- Directly address the people of Israel, laying out your compassionate, pragmatic vision for a future Israel that enjoys security and peace, and is a respected member of the community of nations. Travel to the region, including Israel, to deliver this message in person.
- Make clear to Israelis, Palestinians, and the world that you will back this vision with concrete actions to re-accredit the two-state solution and to hold both parties accountable for actions that undermine it.
- Strengthen your hand in promoting peace by embracing and leveraging constructive engagement by other parties, especially Europe, to produce a united front composed of true friends of Israel who are determined to work, individually and in concert, to prevent opponents of peace, be they Israelis, Palestinians, or others, from destroying the two-state solution. Engage U.S. allies in the region to support these efforts.



- Discard the tired platitudes that in the past have been excuses for inaction. In the current context of growing hopelessness and cynicism, the United States may indeed “want peace more than the parties.” The U.S. has self-evident national security interests in the region – interests that are best served by stability and peace between Israelis and Palestinians, and interests that are directly challenged by the continued conflict.
- Refuse to apologize or shrink from the fact that there can and often is daylight between even the closest of allies. This is all the more true when an ally is led by a government dominated by ideological extremists whose agenda clearly diverges from longstanding policy and national security interests of the United States. As the Commander in Chief responsible for U.S. national security and a true friend of Israel, you cannot be expected to walk in lockstep with an Israeli government whose policies conflict with U.S. interests and will deprive Israel of security, stability, and of its viability as a Jewish state.
- Do not be intimidated by pressure from those whose ideological agendas conflict with your vision. Do not forget for even a minute that in the last election you again won the overwhelming majority of the Jewish vote, despite a multi-year effort by opponents to paint you as anti-Israel and even anti-Semitic.
- Reject advice from those who might argue that, for political reasons, you cannot afford to act resolutely in the Israeli-Palestinian arena. As Commander in Chief of this great nation, your policies must be driven by your own proven judgment about what is best for this country and its future, including in the Middle East. Your agenda cannot be defined by the shrillest and most dogmatic voices, or by narrow considerations of political expediency.

The imminent loss of the two-state solution renders the Israeli-Palestinian conflict an issue that cannot be ignored or “managed” until such time as circumstances for U.S. engagement appear more auspicious. We are confident that you recognize the critical nature of this challenge. We have no doubt that you, as the leader of this great nation, can surmount this challenge and achieve the two-state solution. We stand ready, as proud Americans and proud supporters of a secure, democratic state of Israel, to work with you in this effort.

Sincerely,



James Klutznick
Chairman, Board of Directors



Debra DeLee
President & CEO

