

June XX, 2014

Dear Mr. President:

We write in appreciation of your Administration's dedication to achieving a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Arab conflicts. Secretary of State John Kerry should be commended for his efforts to move the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations forward this past year.

We wish to express our dismay with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' decision to jeopardize negotiations with Israel by agreeing to form a unity government with Hamas and moving towards a unilateral effort at the United Nations (UN) and other international fora.

President Abbas' announcement of a reconciliation agreement with Hamas undercuts American efforts to extend Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. Instead of choosing to continue talks, President Abbas has aligned himself with Hamas, a designated foreign terrorist organization that openly calls for Israel's destruction. Despite assertions that Hamas may conform its policies to that of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), this month Hamas leaders again repeated their refusal to meet recognized international demands: recognition of Israel, renunciation of terror, and acceptance of previous Israel-PLO agreements. U.S. law is very clear on this - if a unity government is formed with Hamas ministers, aid cannot be provided to the Palestinian Authority unless these conditions are met.

President Abbas has also announced an intention to renew efforts to upgrade the status of the Palestinians within international organizations. Such action directly contradicts explicit commitments the Palestinians made at the start of the peace talks.

If President Abbas succeeds in this effort and in forming a unity government with Hamas, he will trigger U.S. laws that cut off aid to the Palestinians and contributions to the affected UN agencies. We strongly urge you and your administration to continue to actively oppose any and all efforts by the Palestinians to upgrade their status within the UN system or at the International Criminal Court.

Unfortunately, Palestinians and some of their allies have increasingly engaged in efforts to attack Israel's legitimacy. We urge you to continue our country's strong opposition to any efforts to boycott, divest from, or sanction Israel. The entire world must understand that acts designed to single out and intimidate Israel through economic and political pressure will be strongly opposed by the United States, and that we will take steps to counter them.

Mr. President, our nation and your administration have put great effort into promoting peace between Israel and the Palestinians. Throughout, Israel has expressed its commitment to seek peace. We urge you to continue to impress on President Abbas the need for him to cease distracting efforts with Hamas and international organizations and return to the negotiating table with Israel.

Sincerely,

Cardin

Collins