

September 9, 2002

A Letter to President George W. Bush

Dear Mr. President,

The broad outlines of a solution that will end the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, open the door to a resolution of the Israeli-Arab Conflict, and bring normalization with the Arab world are clear:

- Two states, one Jewish and one Palestinian.
- Withdrawal from territories occupied in 1967 with border adjustments and territorial swaps.
- Sharing sovereignty in Jerusalem following the formula, “What is Jewish will be Israeli, what is Arab will be Palestinian.”
- A solution to the problem of Palestinian refugees that is based on compensation, rehabilitation and resettlement. There will be no specific right of return to the State of Israel.
- Special arrangements to ensure Israeli security.
- An announced and enforced end to the conflict, including all forms of terrorism and violence.

While there is unprecedented worldwide support for a solution along these lines, today there is virtually no likelihood that such a solution can be achieved through bilateral negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. Some have concluded from this that the conflict cannot be resolved and thus it would be wise for the United States to not engage too deeply in such efforts.

We urge you to reach a very different conclusion. What is necessary is for the United States to move beyond its traditional role as a sponsor and mediator for bilateral negotiations. Today, the United States must lead the international community, with the support of moderate Arab states, to develop in detail a solution along the lines outlined above, and to vigorously encourage both sides to accept it.

Within the Israeli public there is solid support for this approach. For instance, in a recent poll conducted by the Steinmetz Center of Tel Aviv University, some 67% of Israeli Jews support an active American effort to formulate a detailed peace agreement for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. They want the United States to then recruit international support in an effort to convince the parties to accept this agreement.

If both peoples can be presented with a detailed final status agreement which would end the conflict and meet their most basic needs, it is highly likely that the two peoples will say “Yes” and will compel their leaders to do likewise. Such an approach can occur only with your leadership. We appeal to you to move in this direction.

Shlomo Ben-Ami

Amnon Lipkin-Shahak

Yuli Tamir

Cc:

Secretary of State Colin L. Powell

National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice