

December __, 2007

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
Secretary
U.S. Department of State

Dear Madam Secretary:

We write to applaud your work at the recent Annapolis Conference which has led to a pledge by Israeli and Palestinian leaders to achieve a permanent peace settlement by the end of 2008. The memorandum of understanding issued ahead of the Annapolis Conference by Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas illustrates not only the leaders' commitment to peace, but also the value of proactive U.S. engagement in the peace process.

While the outcome of the Annapolis Conference was encouraging, the road to a final agreement will require serious concessions from both parties involved. It is therefore imperative that the United States continues to play a vigorous and proactive role in helping Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas remain committed to a final status agreement.

Throughout history, American leadership has played an integral role in the quest for peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors, and it is of paramount importance that the United States continues to work with all parties involved to bring about a comprehensive final status agreement between Israel and the Palestinian people. With this in mind, we respectfully request that you remain actively engaged in the negotiation and implementation process as Israel and the Palestinian Authority work toward a final status agreement.

We ask that you call upon President Abbas to continue to denounce all terror attacks on Israeli targets both in Israel and the West Bank. We further ask that you press President Abbas to unconditionally recognize the Jewish state of Israel's right to exist. We also ask that you continue to assist and strengthen the Abbas government as it confronts Hamas and other extremists by providing humanitarian and financial aid to the Palestinian Authority. President Abbas has recognized the road ahead is a challenging one, and that the Palestinian people will be forced to make concessions in the name of peace, but he has courageously accepted this challenge; it is our view that the United States must continue to support the Abbas government, politically as well as financially, as it works toward a final status agreement with Israel.

Prime Minister Olmert has also recognized the obstacles that lie ahead, and has boldly warned the Israeli people to prepare to make difficult compromises in the name of a lasting and permanent peace. As the only democracy in the Middle East, the United States must remain a steadfast supporter of Israel and its right to defend itself from terrorist threats. However, as the negotiations toward a final status agreement begin, we also feel it is crucial that Israel take steps to ease the living conditions of the Palestinian people as a symbol of its commitment to a final settlement.

We urge you to call upon the government of Prime Minister Olmert to abide by Israel's commitments to the 2002 Roadmap to Peace, including a freeze on the construction of new

settlements beyond Israel's 1967 borders, the dismantling of illegal West Bank settlements and "outposts," and a reduction of roadblocks and checkpoints in the Palestinian territories to allow increased movement for the Palestinian people.

We recognize the many challenges the lie ahead, and that, ultimately, it is the Israeli and Palestinian people themselves who must find the strength to commit to peace; but we also recognize that U.S. leadership and mediation have lead to some of the greatest breakthroughs in Israeli-Arab relations. We encourage you to remain actively involved in the peace process and press both Israeli and Palestinian leaders to honor their commitments to finding an acceptable compromise and agreeing on a final status accord.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,