

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 17, 2011

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street N.W.  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton:

As unrest continues in the Middle East, the United States must remain steady in its unyielding support of our friend and ally, Israel. Sadly, Israel is in a volatile region of the world where her values of self determination and democracy are under constant attack.

Reports have surfaced that the United States is negotiating with a group of Arab nations about supporting a possible United Nations Security Council (UNSC) presidential statement critical of Israel and possibly taking other similar steps in exchange for Arab agreement to withdraw a UNSC resolution deeming Israeli construction in the West Bank and East Jerusalem illegal. It is also not clear whether the U.S. would veto a resolution on settlements should it be brought to the U.N. Security Council. It should not be the practice of the U.S. to be conducting back door deals, of any sort, that weaken the strategic interests of any ally – let alone one of our closest allies. We strongly urge you to make it clear that the U.S. will oppose any U.N. efforts to pressure Israel on the “settlements” issue. U.N. action merely further complicates a final-status issue that needs to be negotiated directly between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

Israel is a faithful ally of the United States, and these unprecedented steps at the U.N. would mark a disconcerting change in U.S. foreign policy. These actions would also send harmful signals to America’s allies worldwide, not just for our ally, Israel.

Israel has taken unilateral steps to bring peace to the region. This notably includes the 10-month construction moratorium on new construction activity in the West Bank. If housing and commercial construction were truly the main obstacle to peace, as stated by Palestinian observer at the U.N. Riyad Mansour, then the Palestinian Authority would have come to the peace table during this moratorium. American pressure needs to be exerted on the Palestinians to come to the negotiating table. These issues can only be discussed and resolved through direct, bilateral negotiations and not through bodies like the United Nations.

As Members of Congress, we urge Administration officials not to appease Arab states at the expense of Israel. The U.S. must remain steadfast in its support of Israel, veto the upcoming U.N. Security Council resolution, and otherwise reject any related statement against Israel at the U.N. We look forward to your immediate reply to this time-sensitive situation.

Sincerely,

