

August 27, 2019

The Honorable Bradley S. Schneider  
1432 Longworth House Office Building  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Lee Zeldin  
2441 Rayburn House Office Building  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jerrold Nadler  
2132 Rayburn Office Building  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Ann Wagner  
2350 Rayburn Office Building  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives Schneider, Zeldin, Nadler, and Wagner:

We wish to express our appreciation for the passage of House Resolution 246.

Specifically, we appreciate the overwhelming, bipartisan majority of Members who voiced their clear opposition to the BDS Movement and efforts to deny Israel's legitimacy and affirmed their *“strong support for a negotiated solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict resulting in two states—a democratic Jewish State of Israel, and a viable, democratic Palestinian state—living side-by-side in peace, security, and mutual recognition.”*

Indeed, as former senior officials in Israeli security and military agencies, we are united in the conviction that a negotiated two-state agreement is essential to preserve the kind of Israel we dedicated our lives to fighting for on all fronts: a secure, thriving democracy with a solid Jewish majority for generations.

We are confident that the robust security arrangements that Israel will insist upon in any negotiations, and with which we are intimately familiar, will enhance Israel's security and our ability to defend ourselves by ourselves against all threats – near and far.

Even though the road toward a two-state solution may be long, phased, and multifaceted, we are convinced that it is essential to preserve and pursue that option.

We are grateful to Congress for its overwhelming bipartisan endorsement of this position, which is critical to Israel's future, and we thank you for taking this step as a statement of your unwavering support for Israel and commitment to its security.

Indeed, anything that places this two-state vision at risk and undermines its prospects presents a real threat to Israel's security. Most pressingly, we are mobilized to prevent any move toward unilateral territorial annexation - no matter how limited or incremental - or extending sovereignty to any Jewish community in Judea and Samaria.

We firmly endorse the traditional Israeli negotiating position that in the context of territorial swaps, major settlement blocs and East Jerusalem Jewish neighborhoods will be included as a part of Israel in a permanent status agreement. However, Israel's security and wellbeing mandate avoiding such steps outside of the context of a negotiated agreement with the Palestinians. Any unilateral annexation of territory or extension of sovereignty to the West Bank will put Israel's security and safety along with the well-being of its citizens at risk.

A unilateral annexation risks depriving the Palestinian Authority of any remaining legitimacy for sustaining security coordination with our forces. Should security coordination collapse, the resulting security vacuum will be filled by hostile forces and terrorist activity, with radical, militant groups, including Hamas, best positioned to take over the West Bank. To preempt that, the IDF might have no choice but to reoccupy the entire area, with Israel running the lives and funding the needs of millions of Palestinians with no exit strategy.

We look forward to future bipartisan congressional initiatives that explicitly identify annexation as a threat to Israel's security, and Jewish and democratic future. As Israelis hold Congress in the highest regard, your words and deeds in support of the two-state solution and opposition to initiatives that thwart separation from the Palestinians in favor of unilaterally annexing the West Bank are uniquely important.

Thank you for your continued support of the U.S.-Israel strategic partnership and Israel's fundamental security.

Sincerely,

**Uzi Arad**

*Former Mossad Intelligence Division Head*

*Former Foreign Policy Adviser to Prime Minister Netanyahu*

*Former Head of National Security Council under Prime Minister Netanyahu*

**Col. (Ret.) Shaul Arieli**

*Former Gaza Brigade Commander*

*Former Head of Peace Negotiations Administration under Prime Ministers Rabin, Peres and Barak*

**Admiral (Ret.) Ami Ayalon**

*Former Head of Shin Bet*

*Former Commander in Chief of the Israeli Navy*

**Maj. Gen. (Ret.) David (Dudu) Ben Bassat**

*Former Commander in Chief of the Israeli Navy*

**Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Ehud (Udi) Dekel**

*Former Head of IDF Strategic Planning Division*

*Former Lead Peace Negotiator under Prime Minister Olmert*

**Eran Etzion**

*Former Deputy National Security Adviser under Prime Ministers Sharon and Olmert*

**David (Chuck) Freilich**

*Former Deputy National Security Adviser under Prime Minister Sharon*

**Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Shlomo Gazit**

*Former Head of Military Intelligence*

*Former Coordinator of Government Activity in the Territories (COGAT)*

*[Previously titled Inter-Ministerial GM Committee]*

**Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Michael (Mike) Herzog**

*Former Head of the Strategic Planning Division*

*Former Military Secretary to Ministers of Defense*

*Former Special Emissary for Peace Negotiations under Prime Minister Netanyahu*

**Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Giora Inbar**

*Former Commander of the Givati Brigade*

*Former Commander of the Shaldag Special Forces*

**Rolly Gueron**

*Former Mossad Intelligence Division Head*

**Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Ruth Malki Yaron**

*Former IDF Spokesperson*

**Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Amram Mitzna**

*Former Commander of Central Command*

*Former Head of Planning Division*

**Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Avi Mizrahi**

*Former Commander of Central Command*

*Former Chief of Ground Forces*

**Ilan Mizrahi**

*Former Mossad Deputy Director*

*Former Head of National Security Council under Prime Minister Olmert*

**Lt. Col. (Ret.) Orna Mizrahi**

*Former Deputy National Security Adviser under Prime Minister Netanyahu*

**Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Israela Oron**

*Former Head of the Women's Corps*

*Former Deputy National Security Adviser under Prime Ministers Barak and Sharon*

**Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Yaakov (Mendi) Orr**

*Former Coordinator of Government Activity in the Territories (COGAT)*

**Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Ilan Paz**

*Former Head of West Bank Civil Administration*

**Arye Pellman**

*Former Deputy Head of Shin Bet*

**Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Dov Sedaka**

*Former Head of Gaza Civil Administration*

*Former Head of West Bank Civil Administration*

**Maj. Gen. (Ret) Gadi Shamni**

*Former Commander of Central Command*

*Former Military Secretary to Prime Minister Sharon*

*Former Defense Attaché in the United States*

**Shabtai Shavit**

*Former Head of Mossad*

**Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Efraim Sneh**

*Former Deputy Minister of Defense and Member of Cabinet*

*Former Head of West Bank Civil Administration*

**Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Danny Yatom**

*Former Head of Mossad*

*Former Chief of Staff and Security Adviser under Prime Minister Barak*