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March 16, 2010

The Honorable Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write today to reaffirm our strong commitment to the U.S.-Israel relationship - an extraordinary relationship unlike any other in American history.

The unbreakable bond that ties the United States and Israel roots itself in our shared democratic values of personal freedom and political liberty. In a region filled with brutal dictatorships and terror-sponsoring regimes, Israel stands with the United States on the frontier of freedom - two nations bringing a spark of hope to a region darkened by the despair of repression. And we know that no entity - from Gaza City to Ramallah to Damascus to Tehran - can ever hope to undermine the US-Israeli friendship.

In reaffirming our extraordinary relationship, we recommit ourselves to the following principles:

1. The State of Israel remains the preeminent democracy in the Middle East;
2. The United States has no stronger ally in the Middle East than the State of Israel;
3. Under the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995, official United States policy recognizes Jerusalem as the undivided capital of the State of Israel;
4. The national security of the United States is directly tied to the strength and security of the State of Israel - ensuring Israel's continued military qualitative advantage in the region and completing the U.S.-Israel 10-year Memorandum of Understanding for military assistance remains a key American national security priority; and
5. A nuclear-armed Iran would pose an existential threat to the United States, Israel and democracies around the world - collective action to counter this emerging threat remains the most important issue of our time.

As we write today, Iran's uranium enrichment and ballistic missile programs are accelerating. A nuclear-armed Iran would destabilize the Middle East and pose a direct threat to both American and Israeli citizens. Meanwhile, Iran continues to sponsor global terrorism, undermine U.S. efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan and transfer advanced weapons to its proxies in Syria and Lebanon.

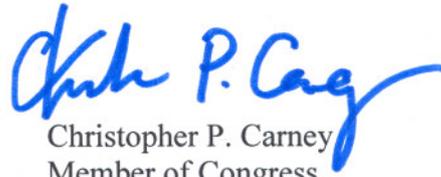
While the recent controversy is regrettable, it should not overshadow the importance of the US-Israel alliance. A zoning dispute over 143 acres of Jewish land in Israel's capital city should not eclipse the growing threat we face from Iran.

To promote Middle East peace and defend America and Israel's national security, we urge your Administration to refrain from further public criticism of Israel and to focus on more pressing issues affecting this vital relationship, such as signing and enforcing the Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act when it comes to your desk.

Sincerely,



Mark Steven Kirk
Member of Congress



Christopher P. Carney
Member of Congress