

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 25, 2020

His Excellency Benjamin Netanyahu
Prime Minister of Israel
3 Kaplan Street
Kiryat Ben-Gurion
Jerusalem, Israel 91919

His Excellency Benjamin Gantz
Alternate Prime Minister, Defense Minister
37 Kaplan Street
Hakirya
Tel Aviv, Israel 61909

His Excellency Gabriel Ashkenazi
Minister of Foreign Affairs
9 Yitzhak Rabin Boulevard
Kiryat Ben-Gurion
Jerusalem, Israel 91035

Dear Prime Minister Netanyahu, Alternate Prime Minister and Defense Minister Gantz,
and Foreign Minister Ashkenazi:

We write as American lawmakers who are long-time supporters, based on our shared democratic values and strategic interests, of Israel and the U.S.-Israel relationship. We firmly believe in, and advocate for, a strong and secure Jewish and democratic State of Israel, a state able to build upon current peace treaties and expand cooperation with regional players and the international community. We have consistently endorsed the pursuit of a negotiated peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians resulting in two states for two peoples and a brighter future for the Israeli people and the Palestinian people. In that vein, we write today to express our deep concern that the push for unilateral annexation of territory in the West Bank after July 1st will make these goals harder to achieve.

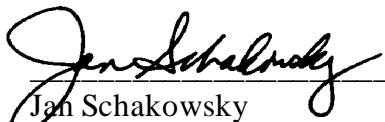
Longstanding, bipartisan U.S. foreign policy supports direct negotiations to achieve a viable two-state solution that addresses the aspirations of both Israelis and Palestinians, and their desire for long-term security and a just, sustainable peace. This position was twice reconfirmed by the U.S. House of Representatives last year. Our fear is that unilateral actions, taken by either side, will push the parties further from negotiations and the possibility of a final, negotiated agreement.

We remain steadfast in our belief that pursuing two states for two peoples is essential to ensuring a secure, Jewish, democratic Israel able to live side-by-side, in peace and mutual recognition, with an independent, viable, de-militarized Palestinian state.

Unilateral annexation would likely jeopardize Israel's significant progress on normalization with Arab states at a time when closer cooperation can contribute to countering shared threats. Unilateral annexation risks insecurity in Jordan, with serious ancillary risks to Israel. Finally, unilateral annexation could create serious problems for Israel with its European friends and other partners around the world. We do not see how any of these acute risks serve the long-term interest of a strong, secure Israel.

As committed partners in supporting and protecting the special U.S.-Israel relationship, we express our deep concern with the stated intention to move ahead with any unilateral annexation of West Bank territory, and we urge your government to reconsider plans to do so.

Sincerely,


Jan Schakowsky
MEMBER OF CONGRESS


Ted Deutch
MEMBER OF CONGRESS


David E. Price
MEMBER OF CONGRESS


Bradley S. Schneider
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Co-Signers:

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Pete Aguilar

Colin Allred

Cindy Axne

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Karen Bass

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