

Plea to VP Biden to help STOP ANNEXATION NOW

Below is a letter that Partners for Progressive Israel sent to the Biden campaign on June 15, suggesting that he issue a clear statement of his intention not to recognize any Israeli annexation of land in the West Bank. The Israeli government's coalition agreement opens that possibility after July 1. We and many others believe that any annexation, even a "symbolic" one, would seriously increase tensions in the whole region and would likely end the possibility of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We hope you will take this opportunity to support our STOP ANNEXATION FUND, dedicated to our work to prevent this disastrous policy from being implemented. Remember: Every dollar you contribute is now worth two!

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June 15, 2020

Dear Vice President Biden,

Partners for Progressive Israel is an American Jewish organization that supports peace, justice, and equality for Israelis and Palestinians, including a Palestinian state. While we strongly support Israel as a Jewish state, we completely oppose annexation by Israel of any part of the West Bank. We should note that, as a nonpartisan 501(c)3 organization, we do not engage in electoral work nor support or oppose candidates.

We thank you for the strong and thoughtful statements you have made expressing your opposition to the unilateral annexation of West Bank territory currently contemplated by the Government of Israel. In particular we appreciate your having said, during a May 19th webinar with Jewish donors, "I'm going to reverse Trump administration steps which I think significantly undercut the prospects of peace."

We are writing to ask you to make a public statement clarifying this expression of resolve to reverse steps of the Trump Administration that are harmful to peace. Specifically we request that you make it unequivocally clear that if elected President that you would withdraw any U.S. recognition of Israeli sovereignty over annexed areas that may have been accorded by the Trump Administration.

Understandably, you may believe that the statements you have already made are sufficient to have communicated that recognition will be withdrawn. **However, having closely followed the debate in Israel, it is clear to us that no such message has gotten through.**

As you know, the debate in Israel is not just between left and right, but

also within the right. For a variety of reasons, many on the right question whether annexation serves Israel's interests. In fact, support for annexation is a minority view among the Israeli public, contrary to many reports. We call your attention to [a report by the Geneva Initiative](#) detailing two recent polls, both showing that only a third of the Israeli public supports annexation. Israel's warming relations with many Arab states will also be [thrust back into deep freeze](#) by annexation.

In arguing for annexation Prime Minister Netanyahu has repeatedly called it as "an historic opportunity," a characterization also made by the U.S. Ambassador to Israel, David Friedman. What they mean is the opportunity, presently at hand, to unilaterally annex West Bank territory and gain recognition from the United States, **an opportunity that has never existed under any other Administration than that of President Trump.**

A clear statement from you, that your Administration would withdraw any U.S. recognition provided by the Trump Administration will underscore that there is no "historic opportunity," and that if you are elected, the era of U.S. recognition of annexation will have endured only for a matter of months. If this is made crystal clear, in view of the intense debate over annexation, even many of its most vigorous proponents of annexation will recognize that it would be imprudent to take such a major step in advance of the U.S. Presidential elections. And if annexation is delayed until after the elections, and if you are elected, it is extremely unlikely that annexation will go forward.

Thus, only you are in a position to bring this added clarity to the ongoing Israeli discourse, for the sake of both Israel and the United States. We hope you will seize this opportunity.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Paul Scham
President



Leonard Grob
Vice President