

# **The U.S. and “Defensible Borders”: How Washington Has Understood UN Security Council Resolution 242 and Israel’s Requirements for Withdrawal**

**Dr. Dore Gold**

## **U.S. Policy Does Not Seek Israel’s Return to the 1967 Borders**

The United States has historically backed Israel’s view that UN Security Council Resolution 242, adopted on November 22, 1967, does not require a full withdrawal to the 1949 Armistice Lines (the 1967 borders). Moreover, in addition to that interpretation, both Democratic and Republican administrations have argued that Israel was entitled to “defensible borders.” In other words, the American backing of defensible borders has been bipartisan, right up to its latest rendition that was provided by President George W. Bush in April 2004. And it was rooted in America’s long-standing support for the security of Israel that went well beyond the various legal interpretations of UN resolutions.

Why is the U.S. position so important to consider? First, while it is true that ultimately Israel and the Palestinians themselves must decide on the whereabouts of the future borders as part of any negotiation, the U.S. position on borders directly affects the level of expectation of the Arab side regarding the depth of the Israeli concessions they can obtain. To the extent that the U.S. limits its demands of Israel through either presidential declarations or statements of the secretary of state, then the Arab states and the Palestinian Arabs will have to settle for less in terms of any Israeli withdrawal. U.S. declaratory policy, then, fundamentally affects whether Arab-Israeli differences can ultimately be bridged at the negotiating table or whether they simply remain too far apart.

Second, there is a related dynamic. Historically, Arab diplomats preferred to extract Israeli concessions through international bodies, like the UN, or even through the U.S., and thereby limit the direct concessions they must provide to Israel in return. According to this scenario, the UN, with U.S. acquiescence, could set the terms of an Israeli withdrawal in the West Bank that Israel would be pressured to fulfill with only minimal bilateral commitments provided by the Arab states. In fact, it was Egyptian President Anwar Sadat who used to say that the U.S. “holds

99 percent of the cards” in the peace process, before he signed the Israeli-Egyptian Treaty of Peace in 1979. Therefore, if the Arab states understand that the U.S. won’t just deliver Israel according to their liking, then they will be compelled to deal with Israel directly.

### **Confusion in Jerusalem About the U.S. Position**

Yet despite the critical importance of America’s traditional support for Israel’s understanding of UN Security Council Resolution 242, historically there has been considerable confusion in Jerusalem about this subject. All too frequently, Israeli diplomats err in asserting that, according to the U.S., Israel must ultimately pull back to the 1967 lines, with perhaps the addition that minor border modifications will be allowed.

### **The U.S. Position on UN Resolution 242**

However, a careful analysis of the development of the U.S. position on UN Security Council Resolution 242 reveals that this “maximalist” interpretation of U.S. policy is fundamentally mistaken. In fact, successive U.S. administrations following the 1967 Six-Day War have demonstrated considerable flexibility over the years regarding the extent of withdrawal that they expected of Israel. True, sometimes the State Department bureaucracy – especially diplomats in the Near Eastern Affairs division that dealt with the Arab world – adhered to a more hard-line view of Israel’s requirements for withdrawal. But this issue was not decided at their level. Indeed, over time, successive administrations would even go so far as to issue explicit declarations rejecting the requirement of

***R***esolution 242 was a joint product of both the British and U.S. ambassadors to the UN. George Brown, who was British Foreign Secretary in 1967, said 242 “means Israel will not withdraw from all the territories.”

Those Israelis who take this mistaken position about U.S. policy tend to conclude that Israel has no alternative but to accept this policy as a given, and thereby concede Israel’s right to defensible borders.

full withdrawal and backing Israel’s right to defensible borders instead.

What was the source of America’s support for Israel? It is important to recall that UN Security Council Resolution 242 of November 22, 1967, was a joint product of

both the British ambassador to the UN, Lord Caradon, and the U.S. ambassador to the UN, Arthur Goldberg. This was especially true of the withdrawal clause in the resolution which called on Israeli armed forces to withdraw “from territories” and not “from all the territories” or “from the territories” as the Soviet Union had demanded.

The exclusion of the definite article “the” from the withdrawal clause was not decided by a low-level legal drafting team or even at the ambassadorial level. And it was not just a matter for petty legalists. Rather, President Lyndon Baines Johnson himself decided that it was important to stick to this phraseology, despite the pressure from the Soviet premier, Alexei Kosygin, who had sought to incorporate stricter additional language requiring a full Israel withdrawal.<sup>1</sup>

on Resolution 242 during a *Meet the Press* interview some years later: “I was engaged in the negotiation for months of that resolution. That resolution did not say ‘total withdrawal.’”<sup>2</sup> This U.S. position had been fully coordinated with the British at the time. Indeed, George Brown, who had served as British foreign secretary in 1967 during Prime Minister Harold Wilson’s Labour government, summarized Resolution 242 as follows: “The proposal said, ‘Israel will withdraw from territories that were occupied,’ not ‘from the territories,’ which means Israel will not withdraw from all the territories.”<sup>3</sup>

***In the wake of the Six-Day War, President Lyndon Johnson declared that “an immediate return to the situation as it was on June 4,” before the outbreak of hostilities, was “not a prescription for peace, but for renewed hostilities.” What was needed were “recognized boundaries” that would provide “security against terror, destruction and war.”***

The meaning of UN Security Council Resolution 242 was absolutely clear to those who were involved in this drafting process. Thus, Joseph P. Sisco, who would serve as the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, commented

## President Johnson: '67 Line a Prescription for Renewed Hostilities

President Johnson's insistence on protecting the territorial flexibility of Resolution 242 could be traced to his statements made on June 19, 1967, in the immediate wake of the Six-Day War. In fact, Johnson declared that "an immediate return to the situation as it was on June 4," before the outbreak of hostilities, was "not a prescription for peace, but for renewed hostilities." He stated that the old "truce lines" had been "fragile and violated." What was needed, in Johnson's view, were "recognized boundaries" that would provide "security against terror, destruction and war."<sup>4</sup>

Ambassador Goldberg would additionally note sometime later another aspect of the Johnson administration's

U.S. administrations would at times criticize Israel's construction practices in the eastern parts of Jerusalem that it had captured.

Within a number of years, U.S. diplomacy would reflect the idea that Israel was entitled to changes in the pre-1967 lines. At first, public expressions by the Nixon administration were indeed minimalist; Secretary of State William Rogers declared in 1969 that there would be "insubstantial alterations" of the 1967 lines. At the time, Rogers' policy was severely criticized by Stephen W. Schwebel, the Executive Director of the American Society of International Law, who would become the Legal Advisor of the U.S. Department of State and later serve on the International Court of Justice in The Hague. Schwebel reminded Rogers of Israel's legal rights in the West Bank in the *American Journal of International Law* (64\344,1970) when he wrote: "Where the prior holder of

**I**n referring to the 1967 lines, Nixon told Kissinger: "you and I both know they [the Israelis] can't go back to the other borders."

policy that was reflected in the language of its UN proposals: "Resolution 242 in no way refers to Jerusalem, and this omission was deliberate."<sup>5</sup> The U.S. was not about to propose the restoration of the status quo ante in Jerusalem either, even though successive

territory had seized that territory unlawfully, the state which subsequently takes that territory in the lawful exercise of self-defense has, against that prior holder, better title." In the international legal community there was an acute awareness that Jordan, the West

Bank's previous occupant prior to 1967, had illegally invaded the West Bank in 1948, while Israel captured the territory in a war of self-defense.

## **President Nixon: The Israelis "Can't Go Back" to the 1967 Borders**

Rogers was soon replaced, in any case, by Henry Kissinger, Nixon's national security advisor, who significantly modified Rogers' position. Already in 1973, in subsequently disclosed private conversations with Kissinger, in referring to the 1967 lines, Nixon explicitly admitted: "you and I both know they [the Israelis] can't go back to the other borders."<sup>6</sup> This became evident in September 1975, under the Ford administration, in the context of the Sinai II Disengagement Agreement. While the agreement covered a second Israeli pullout from the Sinai Peninsula, Israel's prime minister at the time, Yitzhak Rabin, achieved a series of understandings with the U.S. that covered other fronts of the Arab-Israeli peace process. For example, President Ford provided

***P***resident Ford wrote to Prime Minister Rabin that the U.S. "will give great weight to Israel's position that any peace agreement with Syria must be predicated on Israel remaining on the Golan Heights."

Prime Minister Rabin with a letter on the future of the Golan Heights that stated:

The U.S. has not developed a final position on the borders. Should it do so it will give great weight to Israel's

position that any peace agreement with Syria must be predicated on Israel remaining on the Golan Heights.<sup>7</sup>

This carefully drafted language did not detail whether the U.S. would actually accept Israeli sovereignty over parts of the Golan Heights or just the continued presence of the Israel Defense Forces on the Golan plateau. In either case, the Ford letter did not envision a full Israeli pullback to the 1967 lines or even minor modifications of the 1967 border near the Sea of Galilee. These details are not a matter for diplomatic historians alone, for the U.S. explicitly renewed its commitment to the Ford letter just before the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference, when Secretary of State James Baker issued a letter of assurances to Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir. Moreover, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu obtained the recommitment of the Clinton administration

## **President Reagan: I Can't Ask Israel to Return to the Pre-1967 Borders**

It was the administration of President Ronald Reagan that most forcefully articulated Israel's right to defensible borders, just after President Carter appeared to give only lukewarm support for the U.S.-Israeli understandings of the Ford-Kissinger era. Reagan himself stated in his September 1, 1982, address that became known as the "Reagan Plan": "In the pre-1967 borders, Israel was barely ten miles wide at its narrowest point. The bulk of Israel's population lived within artillery range of hostile armies. I am not about to ask Israel to live that way again." He explicitly stressed that Israel had a right to defensible borders.

Reagan came up with a flexible formula for Israeli withdrawal: "The extent to which Israel should be asked to give up

***It was the administration of President Ronald Reagan that most forcefully articulated Israel's right to defensible borders. Reagan himself stated: "In the pre-1967 borders, Israel was barely ten miles wide at its narrowest point. The bulk of Israel's population lived within artillery range of hostile armies. I am not about to ask Israel to live that way again."***

to the Ford letter, just prior to the opening of Israel-Palestinian negotiations over Hebron.

territory will be heavily affected by the extent of the peace and normalization."<sup>8</sup> Secretary of State George Shultz was even more explicit about what this meant during a September 1988 address: "Israel will never negotiate from or return to the 1967 borders."<sup>9</sup>

What did Shultz mean by his statement? Was he recognizing Israeli rights to retain large portions of the West Bank? A half year earlier, he demonstrated considerable diplomatic creativity in considering alternatives to a full Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 lines. He even proposed what was, in effect, a “functional compromise” in the West Bank, as opposed to a “territorial compromise.” Shultz was saying that the West Bank should be divided between Israel and the Jordanians according to different functions of government, and not in terms of drawing new internal borders. In an address to the Council on Foreign Relations in February 1988, he asserted: “the meaning of sovereignty, the meaning of territory, is changing, and what any national government can control, or what any unit that thinks it has sovereignty or jurisdiction over a certain area can control, is shifting gears.”<sup>10</sup>

security, maintenance of law and order, access to limited supplies of water, management of education, health, and other civic functions, and so forth.”<sup>11</sup> The net effect of this thinking was to protect Israel’s security interests and provide it with a defensible border that would be substantially different from the 1967 lines.

**S**ecretary of State George Shultz was even more explicit: ***“Israel will never negotiate from or return to the 1967 borders.”***

In his memoirs, Shultz elaborated on his 1988 address. He wrote that he had spoken to both Israeli and Jordanian leaders in the spirit of his speech and argued that “who controls what...would necessarily vary over such diverse functions as external

## **Clinton's Secretary of State Reaffirms: Israel Entitled to Defensible Borders**

U.S. support for defensible borders had clearly become bipartisan and continued into the 1990s, even as the Palestinians replaced Jordan as the primary Arab claimant to the West Bank. At the time of the completion of the 1997 Hebron Protocol, Secretary of State Warren Christopher wrote a letter of assurances to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. In the Christopher letter, the Clinton administration basically stated that it was not going to second-guess Israel about its security needs: “a hallmark of U.S. policy remains our commitment to work cooperatively to seek to meet the security needs that Israel identifies” (emphasis added). This meant that Israel would be the final arbiter of its defense needs. Christopher then added: “Finally, I would like to reiterate our position that Israel is entitled to secure and defensible borders (emphasis added), which should be directly negotiated and agreed with its neighbors.”<sup>12</sup>

In summary, there is no basis to the argument that the U.S. has traditionally demanded of Israel either a full withdrawal or a nearly full withdrawal from the territories it captured in the 1967 Six-Day War. This is particularly true of the West Bank and Gaza Strip where only armistice lines were drawn in 1949, reflecting where embattled armies had halted their advance and no permanent international borders existed. The only development that has altered this American stance in support of defensible borders in the

past involved changes in the Israeli position to which the U.S. responded.

## **The Unofficial Clinton/Barak Parameters Are Off the Table**

About two weeks before he completed his second term in office, President Bill Clinton presented his own plan for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on January 7, 2001. The Clinton parameters were partly based on the proposals made by Israel's prime minister, Ehud Barak, at the failed Camp David Summit of July 2000.

In the territorial sphere, Clinton spoke about Israel annexing “settlement blocs” in the West Bank. However, he made this annexation of territory by Israel conditional upon a “land swap” taking place, according to which Israel would concede territory under its sovereignty before 1967 in exchange for any new West Bank land. This “land swap” was not required by UN Resolution 242, but was a new Israeli concession made during the Barak government that Clinton adopted; it should be noted for the record, however, that Maj.-Gen. (res.) Danny Yatom, who served as the head of Barak's foreign and defense staff, has argued that Barak himself never offered these “land swaps” at Camp David.

Additionally, under the Clinton parameters, Israel was supposed to withdraw from the Jordan Valley (which Rabin sought to retain) and thereby give up on defensible borders. Instead, Clinton proposed an “international presence” to replace the Israel Defense Forces. This particular component of

the proposals severely compromised Israel's doctrine of self-reliance in matters of defense and seemed to ignore Israel's problematic history with the UN and other international forces in even more limited roles such as peace monitoring.

Prior to their formal release, the Chief of Staff of the Israel Defense Forces, Lt.-Gen. Shaul Mofaz, severely criticized the Clinton parameters before the Israeli cabinet as a virtual disaster for Israel: *Yediot Ahronot* reported on December 29, 2000, his judgment that: "The Clinton bridging proposal is inconsistent with Israel's security interests and, if it will be accepted, *it will threaten the security of the state*" (emphasis added).

The Clinton parameters did not become official U.S. policy. After President George W. Bush came into office, U.S. officials informed the newly elected Sharon government that it would not be bound by

## **President Bush: It is Unrealistic to Expect a Return to the Armistice Lines of 1949**

The best proof that the U.S. had readopted its traditional policy that Israel was entitled to defensible borders came from the letter of assurances written by President Bush to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon on April 14, 2004, after the presentation in Washington of Israel's disengagement plan from the Gaza Strip. Bush wrote: "The United States reiterates its steadfast commitment to Israel's security, including secure and defensible borders, and to preserve and strengthen Israel's capability to deter and defend itself, by itself, against any threat or possible combination of threats."<sup>13</sup> Here, then, was an implicit link suggested between the letter's reference to defensible borders and Israel's

**P**resident Bush wrote to Prime Minister Sharon on April 14, 2004: *"In light of new realities on the ground, including already existing major Israeli population centers, it is unrealistic to expect that the outcome of final status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949."*

proposals made by the Barak team at Camp David, which served as the basis for the Clinton parameters. In short, Clinton's retreat from defensible borders was off the table.

self-defense capabilities, by virtue of the fact that they were coupled together in the very same sentence.

Bush clearly did not envision Israel withdrawing to the 1967 lines. Later in his letter he stated: "In light of new realities on

the ground, including already existing major Israeli population centers, it is unrealistic to expect that the outcome of final status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949.” Bush did not use the term “settlement blocs,” as Clinton did, but appeared to be referring to the same idea. Less than a year later, on March 27, 2005, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice explained on Israel Radio that “Israeli population centers” referred to “the large settlement blocs” in the West Bank.<sup>14</sup>

More significantly, Bush did not make the retention of “Israeli population centers” in the West Bank contingent upon Israel agreeing to land swaps, using territory under Israeli sovereignty from within the pre-1967 borders as Clinton had insisted. In that sense, Bush restored the original terms of reference in the peace process that had been contained in Resolution 242 by confining the territorial issue

for the Bush letter, as a whole, recognized clear-cut modifications of the pre-1967 lines. Moreover, by linking the idea of defensible borders to Israel’s defensive capabilities, as noted above, Bush was making clear that a “defensible border” had to improve Israel’s ability to provide for its own security. True, a “secure boundary,” as mentioned in Resolution 242, included that interpretation as well. But it could also imply a boundary that was secured by U.S. security guarantees, NATO troops, or even other international forces. Bush’s letter did not contain this ambiguity, but rather specifically tied defensible borders to Israel’s ability to defend itself.

On March 25, 2005, the U.S. Ambassador to Israel, Dan Kurtzer, was quoted in the Israeli daily *Yediot Ahronot* as saying that there was no U.S.-Israeli “understanding” over Israel’s retention of West Bank settlement blocs. Kurtzer denied the *Yediot* report. Yet

**The Bush letter made clear that a “defensible border” had to improve Israel’s ability to provide for its own security.**

to Israel’s east to the dispute over the ultimate status of the West Bank without involving any additional territorial exchanges.

Bush’s recognition of Israel’s right to defensible borders was the most explicit expression of the U.S. stand on the subject,

the story raised the question of what kind of commitment the Bush letter exactly constituted. In U.S. practice, a treaty is the strongest form of inter-state commitment, followed by an executive agreement (such as a Memorandum of Understanding

without congressional ratification). Still, an exchange of letters provides an international commitment as well. Kurtzer himself reiterated this point on Israel's Channel 10 television: "Those commitments are very, very firm with respect to these Israeli population centers; our expectation is that Israel is not going to be going back to the 1967 lines." When asked if these "population centers" were "settlement blocs," he replied: "That's correct."<sup>15</sup>

Separately, Bush has introduced the idea of a viable and contiguous Palestinian state, which has territorial implications. At a minimum, contiguity refers to creating an unobstructed connection between all the West Bank cities, so that a Palestinian could drive from Jenin to Hebron. Palestinians might construe American references to contiguity as including a Palestinian-controlled connection from the West Bank to the Gaza Strip, like the "safe passage" mentioned in the Oslo Accords.

State of Washington. Similarly, there is no such sovereign connection between the parts of other geographically separated states, like Oman. On February 21, 2005, President Bush clarified that his administration's call for territorial contiguity referred specifically to the West Bank.

***There is no international legal right of states to have a sovereign connection between parts that are geographically separated: The U.S. does not have a sovereign territorial connection between Alaska and the State of Washington.***

But this would entail bifurcating Israel in two. In any case, there is no international legal right of states to have a sovereign connection between parts that are geographically separated: The U.S. has no sovereign territorial connection between Alaska and the

## **Historically, the U.S. Has Not Insisted on Full Israeli Withdrawal**

In conclusion, historically the U.S. has not insisted on a full Israeli withdrawal to the 1949 armistice lines from the territories that Israel captured in the 1967 War. Yet it is still possible to ask what value these American declarations have if they are made with the additional provision that the ultimate location of Arab-Israeli borders must be decided by the parties themselves. This is particularly true of the 2004 Bush letter which reiterates this point explicitly.

Clearly the U.S. cannot impose the Bush letter on Israel and the Palestinians, if they refuse to accept its terms. The Bush letter only updates and summarizes the U.S. view of the correct interpretation of UN Resolution 242 in any future negotiations.

protects Israel's vital interests prior to the beginning of any future negotiations. It is tantamount to a diplomatic safety net for Israel.

- b. To the extent that other members of the Quartet (Russia, the EU, or the UN) propose that the borders of the Palestinian state in the future be the 1967 lines, the Bush letter essentially says that the U.S. will not be a party to such an initiative.

***What is left now for Israel to do is to provide further details as to the territorial meaning of defensible borders and to reach a more specific understanding with the U.S. regarding its content.***

Its importance emanates from two contexts:

- a. The fact that the April 2003 Quartet roadmap is silent on the subject of Israel's future borders and those of the proposed Palestinian state. At least the Bush letter

## **Defensible Borders: An Integral Part of the American Diplomatic Lexicon**

What is left now for Israel to do is to provide further details as to the territorial meaning of defensible borders and to reach a more specific understanding with the U.S. regarding its content, given the fact that it has become an integral part of the American diplomatic lexicon for the Arab-Israeli peace process.

In the future, would the United States remain sympathetic to Israel's security concerns so that such understandings can be reached? After all, much of the U.S. positioning on defensible borders began to be articulated during the Cold War. Additionally, in a post-Iraq War Middle East, in which the threat to Israel from its eastern front has been diminished in the immediate

the event that the intentions of Russia and China were to change in the future.

Second, Israel's need for defensible borders also has a context in the war on terrorism. If Israel cedes control over the Jordan Valley, for example, large-scale weapons smuggling to terrorist groups in the West Bank hills that dominate Israel's coastal plain would become more prevalent. The 9/11 Commission asserted that the struggle to transform the Middle East in order to undercut the threats from the new global terrorism will take decades.<sup>16</sup> Thus, Israel has a sound basis for insisting that even after the 2003 Iraq War, its quest for defensible borders remains fully warranted.

Third, during the Clinton years, Washington was sympathetic to the idea of deploying UN and other international forces as a tool for peace-building. This was expressed in the 2001 Clinton proposals for placing international peacekeepers in the

***The permanence of the changes in the Middle East in 2005 cannot be taken for granted by any defense planner. Even the U.S. retains residual capabilities in the event that the intentions of Russia and China were to change in the future.***

term, would the U.S. still back defensible borders? There is a threefold answer to this question. First, the permanence of the changes in the Middle East in 2005 cannot be taken for granted by any defense planner. Even the U.S. retains residual capabilities in

Jordan Valley instead of the Israel Defense Forces. Clearly, enthusiasm for such UN deployments has drastically declined since then, with the disasters that have become associated with UN peacekeeping missions throughout the last decade.

An alternative that might be raised by those who nonetheless seek to remove Israeli forces from the Jordan Valley would be the deployment of U.S. forces, or a non-UN multilateral body like the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) in Egyptian Sinai. Yet such a course of action could pose great risks for the troops involved. In the sparsely-populated Sinai Peninsula, U.S. troops are isolated; they only monitor on the ground the implementation of an inter-state agreement between Israel and Egypt. In contrast, in the Jordan Valley they would be closer to Palestinian population centers and involved in a counter-terrorist mission.

Under such conditions, one cannot rule out attacks against Western forces, like the bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut in 1983. While Hamas and Islamic Jihad have not launched attacks against Western targets overseas, nonetheless, they

three Americans, although it has not been ascertained whether or not Islamist motives were involved.

In short, there are no workable substitutes for Israel protecting itself with defensible borders, given the array of threats it is still likely to face.

***F***or Hamas, any Western military deployment in the Jordan Valley would be viewed in the same way that Islamist groups in the Arabian Peninsula perceived the U.S. presence.

would view any Western presence in what became Palestinian territory through the same ideological prism as militant Islamist groups in the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>17</sup> The Palestinians already attacked a U.S. diplomatic convoy in the Gaza Strip on October 15, 2003, killing

## Appendix 2

### **Letter from U.S. President George W. Bush to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, April 14, 2004<sup>18</sup>**

His Excellency Ariel Sharon  
Prime Minister of Israel

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

Thank you for your letter setting out your disengagement plan.

The United States remains hopeful and determined to find a way forward toward a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. I remain committed to my June 24, 2002, vision of two states living side by side in peace and security as the key to peace, and to the roadmap as the route to get there.

We welcome the disengagement plan you have prepared, under which Israel would withdraw certain military installations and all settlements from Gaza, and withdraw certain military installations and settlements in the West Bank. These steps described in the plan will mark real progress toward realizing my June 24, 2002, vision, and make a real contribution towards peace. We also understand that, in this context, Israel believes it is important to bring new opportunities to the Negev and the Galilee. We are hopeful that steps pursuant to this plan, consistent with my vision, will remind all states and parties of their own obligations under the roadmap.

The United States appreciates the risks such an undertaking represents. I therefore want to reassure you on several points.

First, the United States remains committed to my vision and to its implementation as described in the roadmap. The United States will do its utmost to prevent any attempt by anyone to impose any other plan. Under the roadmap, Palestinians must undertake an immediate cessation of armed activity and all acts of violence against Israelis anywhere, and all official Palestinian institutions must end incitement against Israel. The Palestinian leadership must act decisively against terror, including sustained, targeted, and effective operations to stop terrorism and dismantle terrorist capabilities and infrastructure. Palestinians must undertake a comprehensive and fundamental political reform that includes a strong parliamentary democracy and an empowered prime minister.

Second, there will be no security for Israelis or Palestinians until they and all states, in the region and beyond, join together to fight terrorism and dismantle terrorist organizations. The United States reiterates its steadfast commitment to Israel's security, including secure, defensible

borders, and to preserve and strengthen Israel's capability to deter and defend itself, by itself, against any threat or possible combination of threats.

Third, Israel will retain its right to defend itself against terrorism, including to take actions against terrorist organizations. The United States will lead efforts, working together with Jordan, Egypt, and others in the international community, to build the capacity and will of Palestinian institutions to fight terrorism, dismantle terrorist organizations, and prevent the areas from which Israel has withdrawn from posing a threat that would have to be addressed by any other means. The United States understands that after Israel withdraws from Gaza and/or parts of the West Bank, and pending agreements on other arrangements, existing arrangements regarding control of airspace, territorial waters, and land passages of the West Bank and Gaza will continue.

The United States is strongly committed to Israel's security and well-being as a Jewish state. It seems clear that an agreed, just, fair and realistic framework for a solution to the Palestinian refugee issue as part of any final status agreement will need to be found through the establishment of a Palestinian state, and the settling of Palestinian refugees there, rather than in Israel.

As part of a final peace settlement, Israel must have secure and recognized borders, which should emerge from negotiations between the parties in accordance with UNSC Resolutions 242 and 338. In light of new realities on the ground, including already existing major Israeli population centers, it is unrealistic to expect that the outcome of final status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949, and all previous efforts to negotiate a two-state solution have reached the same conclusion. It is realistic to expect that any final status agreement will only be achieved on the basis of mutually agreed changes that reflect these realities.

I know that, as you state in your letter, you are aware that certain responsibilities face the State of Israel. Among these, your government has stated that the barrier being erected by Israel should be a security rather than political barrier, should be temporary rather than permanent, and therefore not prejudice any final status issues including final borders, and its route should take into account, consistent with security needs, its impact on Palestinians not engaged in terrorist activities.

As you know, the United States supports the establishment of a Palestinian state that is viable, contiguous, sovereign, and independent, so that the Palestinian people can build their own future in accordance with my vision set forth in June 2002 and with the path set forth in the roadmap. The United States will join with others in the international community to foster the development of democratic political institutions and new leadership committed to those institutions, the reconstruction of civic institutions, the growth of a free and prosperous

economy, and the building of capable security institutions dedicated to maintaining law and order and dismantling terrorist organizations.

A peace settlement negotiated between Israelis and Palestinians would be a great boon not only to those peoples but to the peoples of the entire region. Accordingly, the United States believes that all states in the region have special responsibilities: to support the building of the institutions of a Palestinian state; to fight terrorism, and cut off all forms of assistance to individuals and groups engaged in terrorism; and to begin now to move toward more normal relations with the State of Israel. These actions would be true contributions to building peace in the region.

Mr. Prime Minister, you have described a bold and historic initiative that can make an important contribution to peace. I commend your efforts and your courageous decision which I support. As a close friend and ally, the United States intends to work closely with you to help make it a success.

Sincerely,  
George W. Bush

## Appendix 3

### **U.S. Senate and House of Representatives Approve Commitments to Israel in President Bush's Letter of April 14, 2004**

#### **H. CON. RES. 460 CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

Whereas the United States is hopeful that a peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be achieved;

Whereas the United States is strongly committed to the security of Israel and its well-being as a Jewish state;

Whereas Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has proposed an initiative intended to enhance the security of Israel and further the cause of peace in the Middle East;

Whereas President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Sharon have subsequently engaged in a dialogue with respect to this initiative;

Whereas President Bush, as part of that dialogue, expressed the support of the United States for Prime Minister Sharon's initiative in a letter dated April 14, 2004;

Whereas in the April 14, 2004, letter the President stated that in light of new realities on the ground in Israel, including already existing major Israeli population centers, it is unrealistic to expect that the outcome of final status negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949, but realistic to expect that any final status agreement will only be achieved on the basis of mutually agreed changes that reflect these realities;

Whereas the President acknowledged that any agreed, just, fair, and realistic framework for a solution to the Palestinian refugee issue as part of any final status agreement will need to be found through the establishment of a permanent alternative and the settling of Palestinian refugees there rather than in Israel;

Whereas the principles expressed in President Bush's letter will enhance the security of Israel and advance the cause of peace in the Middle East;

Whereas there will be no security for Israelis or Palestinians until Israel and the Palestinians, and all countries in the region and throughout the world, join together to fight terrorism and dismantle terrorist organizations;

Whereas the United States remains committed to the security of Israel, including secure, recognized, and defensible borders, and to preserving and strengthening the capability of Israel to deter enemies and defend itself against any threat;

Whereas Israel has the right to defend itself against terrorism, including the right to take actions against terrorist organizations that threaten the citizens of Israel;

Whereas the President stated on June 24, 2002, his vision of two states, Israel and Palestine, living side-by-side in peace and security and that vision can only be fully realized when terrorism is defeated, so that a new state may be created based on rule of law and respect for human rights; and

Whereas President Bush announced on March 14, 2003, that in order to promote a lasting peace, all Arab states must oppose terrorism, support the emergence of a peaceful and democratic Palestine, and state clearly that they will live in peace with Israel: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress--*

- (1) strongly endorses the principles articulated by President Bush in his letter dated April 14, 2004, to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon which will strengthen the security and well-being of the State of Israel; and
- (2) supports continuing efforts with others in the international community to build the capacity and will of Palestinian institutions to fight terrorism, dismantle terrorist organizations, and prevent the areas from which Israel has withdrawn from posing a threat to the security of Israel.

Passed the House of Representatives, June 23, 2004.

Passed the Senate, June 24, 2004.

## Appendix 4

### **Statement of U.S. President George W. Bush to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, April 11, 2005, in Crawford, Texas<sup>19</sup>**

PRESIDENT BUSH: Mr. Prime Minister, welcome to my home....The United States and the state of Israel have a deep and lasting friendship based on our shared values and aspirations for a peaceful world. The United States is committed to Israel's security and well being as a Jewish state, including secure and defensible borders. We're committed to preserving and strengthening Israel's capability to deter its enemies and to defend itself....

As part of a final peace settlement, Israel must have secure and recognized borders. These should emerge from negotiations between the parties in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. As I said last April, new realities on the ground make it unrealistic to expect that the outcome of final status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949. It is realistic to expect that any final status agreement will be achieved only on the basis of mutually agreed changes that reflect these realities. That's the American view. While the United States will not prejudice the outcome of final status negotiations, those changes on the ground, including existing major Israeli population centers, must be taken into account in any final status negotiations.

## Notes

1. Premier Kosygin wrote to President Johnson on November 21, 1967, requesting that the UK draft resolution, that was to become Resolution 242, include the word “the” before the word “territories.” Johnson wrote back the same day refusing the Soviet request. The Soviet deputy foreign minister, Kuznetsov, tried the same day in New York to insert the word “all,” but was rebuffed. See *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1967-1968, volume XIX, Arab-Israeli Crisis and War 1967*, <http://www.stage.gov/r/pa/ho/frus/johnsonlb/xix/28070.htm>
2. Adnan Abu Odeh, Nabil Elaraby, Meir Rosenne, Dennis Ross, Eugene Rostow, and Vernon Turner, *UN Security Council Resolution 242: The Building Block of Peacemaking* (Washington, D.C.: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1993), p. 88.
3. See Meir Rosenne, in *ibid.*, p. 31.
4. Speech by President Lyndon Johnson, June 19, 1967; <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/US-Israel/lbjpeace.html>
5. Arthur J. Goldberg, Letter to the Editor of *The New York Times*, March 5, 1980.
6. Henry Kissinger, *Crisis: The Anatomy of Two Major Foreign Policy Crises* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2003), p. 140.
7. Letter from President Ford to Prime Minister Rabin, September 1, 1975; [http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/ford\\_rabin\\_letter.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/ford_rabin_letter.html)
8. Speech by President Ronald Reagan, September 1, 1982; <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/resource/speeches/1982/90182d.htm>
9. Secretary of State George P. Shultz’s address, September 16, 1988; [http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m1079/is\\_n2140\\_v88/ai\\_6876262](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1079/is_n2140_v88/ai_6876262)
10. George P. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1993), p. 1022.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 1023.
12. Letter of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, January 17, 1997; <http://mfa.gov.il/mfa/go.asp?MFAH00qo0>
13. Exchange of letters between President Bush and Prime Minister Sharon, April 14, 2004; <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace+Process/Reference+Documents/Exchange+of+letters+Sharon-Bush+14-Apr-2004.htm>
14. Aluf Benn, “PM: Understanding With U.S. About West Bank Settlement Blocs Holds Firm,” *Ha’aretz*, March 27, 2005.
15. <http://www.usembassy-israel.org.il/publish/mission/amb/032505b.html>
16. *The 9/11 Commission Report* (Authorized Edition) (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004), p. 363.
17. “Will a Gaza ‘ Hamas-stan ’ Become a Future Al-Qaeda Sanctuary?” Yaakov Amidror and David Keyes, *Jerusalem Viewpoints*, November 1, 2004; <http://jcpa.org/jl/vp524.htm>
18. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/04/20040414-3.html>
19. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/04/20050411-2.html>