



July 16, 2024

Dear Members of the US Congress,

As you, loyal friends of Israel, prepare to welcome PM Benjamin Netanyahu, we venture the hope that your show of respect for the office of our Prime Minister is not confused with an endorsement of his policies on matters of utmost importance to us all.

Indeed, on behalf of the 530 CIS members, retired IDF Generals, as well as Mossad, Shin Bet, Police, NSC and Foreign Service equivalents, we assume that you are well aware of the damage caused to our national security and bilateral relations by policies pursued by this Prime Minister and the extremists he selected for his cabinet.

We at CIS are united in the realization that our strategic bond with the US is a central pillar of Israel's national security, and that this bond stands on two foundations – shared values and common interests. Consequently, we have been outspoken in pointing out that since its foundation this government has undermined both.

Its early assault on our Supreme Court and its attempts to legislate the stripping of our judiciary of its constitutional oversight powers was suspended only by a powerful display of democratic energy in the form of massive public protest. Yet the threat still looms.

No less worrying has been the erosion of our common interests caused by the Netanyahu government's security and foreign policy. Most recently, this has manifested itself in the conduct of the Gaza war. The war began as the most justified response to Hamas' brutal atrocities. It saw the IDF bravely and professionally destroy Hamas' governance and most of its military formations. Yet to this very day, Netanyahu has refused to heed the advice of our successors in the security agencies and the US to formulate Israel's objectives for the 'morning after', which should have informed our military operation from the outset. Empty slogans such as "total victory" have thus far substituted for policy guidance. Absent clear objectives, a purposeful operation has turned into an open-ended war, with mounting casualties on both sides and with no end in sight.



Worse still, his refusal to embrace the alternative strategy forged by the US, has deprived Israel of the possibility of making good on the war's primary objective – one that you all share - of bringing our hostages home.

More broadly, that alternative strategy holds the promise of transforming the October 7 trauma into a regional strategic opportunity. Commonly referred to as the Biden Initiative, this strategy involves a powerful regional coalition cooperating with Israel on three fronts: securing our exit from Gaza while preventing a Hamas resurgence, offering Palestinians a peaceful alternative to the extremist ideology of Hamas, and regional collaboration in checking Iran's and its proxies' violent designs.

Concurrently, the free hand enjoyed by Netanyahu's coalition partners, who he provided with sensitive national security positions enabling reckless policies and with powerful microphones amplifying despicable and irresponsible statements, has already undermined our national security. Galloping annexation, settler violence and harsh economic measures have brought the West Bank to the brink of eruption and this at a time when our forces are already engaged in dealing with Hamas, Hezbollah, Iran and its other proxies. It has also triggered growing international isolation and scrutiny by the international courts. This seriously threatens the freedom of movement of many Israelis, both in and out of uniform, and potentially additional sanctions.

Dear Friends,

For over a decade, Netanyahu's policies have undermined the bi-partisan nature of US support for Israel, weakened Palestinian moderates, strengthened the fanatic extremists, and sought to undermine our democratic institutions and values. Nonetheless, and even though our successors failed to prevent the October 7 tragedy (for which, unlike the Prime Minister, they have taken full responsibility), we know that Israel remains a strong country militarily, technologically and otherwise. The resilience of our society is second to none.

Having dedicated our lives to Israel's security and its future as a strong Jewish democracy, having fought in all of Israel's wars and having sent troops to battle, we are as optimistic today of our country's future as we have ever been.

However, for that future to materialize, Israel must change course. Internally, there is a need for our government to respect democratic institutions and the norms enshrined in our Declaration of Independence. Externally we need these three: a sea-change in our policy towards the Palestinians, to be governed by support for the moderates while



sustaining their and our joint efforts to check all violent extremists; embracing the opportunity to establish a coalition of like-minded countries willing and able of stand up to Iran; and restoring the solid, bi-partisan foundation of US-Israel relations.

This latter change must begin by acknowledging and expressing heartfelt appreciation for the unprecedented support, in word and deed, extended to our country by President Biden and his administration, by the American people as well as by you, our friends in Congress.

We fervently hope that when the Prime Minister returns home, you will have given him reasons to reflect on the policies he has pursued.

Most respectfully,

CIS leadership:

Maj. Gen. (ret) Matan Vilnai
CIS Chair
Former Deputy Minister of Defense,
Former IDF Deputy Chief of Staff

Maj. Gen. (ret) Danny Yatom
Former Head of Mossad
Former IDF Commander of Central Command

Mr. Tamir Pardo
Former Head of Mossad

Admiral (ret) Ami Ayalon
Former Director of Shin Bet
Former IDF Commander of the Navy

Mr. Yaakov Peri
Former Director of Shin Bet

Mr. Assaf Hefetz
Commissioner (ret) of the Israeli Police



Mr. Shlomo Aharonishky
Commissioner (ret) of the Israeli Police

Mr. Aryeh Pellman
Former Acting Shin Bet Director

Brig. Gen. (ret) Efraim Sneh, M.D.
Former Deputy Minister of Defense
Former Head of West Bank Civil Administration

Admiral David Ben-Bashat
Former IDF Commander of the Navy

Brig. Gen. (ret) Rachel Dolev
Former IDF Chief Military Advocate

Col. (ret) Itamar Yaar
CIS CEO
Former Deputy Head of NSC

Brig. Gen. (ret) Yisraela Oron
Former Deputy Head of NSC

Dr. Nimrod Novik
Former Special Ambassador
Former Policy Adviser to the Prime Minister

Ambassador (ret) Nisim Ben Shitrit
Former Ambassador to Japan
Former Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ambassador (ret) Daniel Carmon
Former Ambassador to India
Former Deputy Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Ambassador (ret) Colette Avital
Former Ambassador to Portugal, former Consul General to New York
Former Deputy Director General, MFA

Ambassador (ret) Jeremy Issacharoff
Former Ambassador to Germany
Former senior Deputy Director General, MFA

Ambassador (ret) Mark Sofer
Former Ambassador to India
Former Policy Adviser to the Foreign Minister