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PENNSYLVANIA

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United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3805

June 3, 2020

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

His Excellency Benjamin Gantz
Minister of Defense
Ministry of Defense
37 Kaplan Street
Tel Aviv, Israel 61909

Dear Prime Minister Netanyahu and Defense Minister Gantz:

As Israel enters a hopeful new chapter after over a year of political turmoil, I am concerned that stated plans to move forward with unilateral annexation of the West Bank will not only eliminate the possibility of a two-state solution, but may result in erosion of regional and international arrangements that guarantee Israel's safety and security. I write to urge you not to move forward with plans to begin annexation on July 1, and to seek a path forward that will lay the groundwork for constructive dialogue toward a two-state solution for Israelis and Palestinians.

The United States and Israel enjoy a special relationship based on a deep commitment to democratic values and the realization of a flourishing, pluralistic and secure Israel. The United States (on a bipartisan basis), Israel and the international community have long worked toward a shared goal of a two-state solution that ensures the security and sovereignty of the Israeli people and the self-determination of the Palestinian people.

Unilateral annexation of West Bank territory would not only reverse decades of cooperation toward these goals, it would also unravel long-observed understandings between the United States, Israel, the Palestinians and regional partners including Jordan and Egypt. Furthermore, based on the proposed plans, annexation will require Israeli security forces to govern a splintered and disconnected series of territories throughout the West Bank – an undertaking that will require immense resources and human capital to enforce – resulting in enormous and undue strain on Israel's security infrastructure. Finally, unilateral annexation could dramatically erode the legitimacy and possibly threaten the very existence of the Palestinian Authority, and would threaten to end Palestinian security cooperation with Israel. This may create a vacuum for Hamas and other terrorist organizations to occupy, not only undercutting the possibility for dialogue and engagement, but resulting in increased threats to Israel's security.

The United States and Israel enjoy an unbreakable bond that goes beyond a typical bilateral relationship between two allies. This relationship permits space for criticism and concern when necessary. I ask that you choose an alternate path that will avert further conflict and lay the groundwork for peace.

Sincerely,



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator