

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 23, 2009

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write in support of your efforts to encourage Arab states to normalize relations with the State of Israel. In your June 4th address to the Muslim world, you highlighted the key role that Arab states can play in furthering the peace process and called on them to openly recognize Israel's legitimacy. Secretary Clinton underscored these remarks when she stated that Arab countries "have a responsibility to support the Palestinian Authority with words and deeds, to take steps to improve relations with Israel and to prepare their publics to embrace peace and accept Israel's place in the region." We applaud these comments and agree with you and Secretary Clinton that Arab states must do more to end their isolation of Israel.

Over the past few months Israel has taken concrete measures to reaffirm its commitment to advancing the peace process. Notably, Prime Minister Netanyahu has publically expressed support for the two-state solution and called for the immediate resumption of peace negotiations. We have also been encouraged by Israeli efforts to improve the daily lives of Palestinians, through measures such as removing roadblocks, assisting with economic development in the West Bank, and supporting the training of professional Palestinian Authority security personnel. These actions have demonstrated that Israel is willing to back up its words with concrete actions, even in the face of continuing threats to its security.

We encourage Arab leaders to take similar tangible steps to demonstrate their commitment to the peace process. Such steps could include ending the Arab League boycott of Israel, meeting openly with Israeli officials, establishing open trade relations with Israel, issuing visas to Israeli citizens, and inviting Israelis to participate in academic and professional conferences and sporting events. We also believe that Arab states must immediately and permanently end official propaganda campaigns which demonize Israel and Jews.

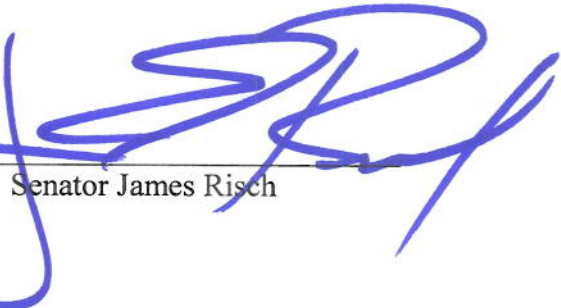
Given these facts, we would like to understand what steps you are urging Arab states to take and what your expectations are from Arab states in the coming weeks and months. We also hope that you will continue to press Arab leaders to consider dramatic gestures toward Israel similar to those taken previously by brave leaders like King Hussein of Jordan and Anwar El-Sadat of Egypt. Such gestures would send a powerful signal that Arab nations are committed to the peace process and could help usher in a new era of peace and security in the Middle East.

Respectfully,



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Senator Evan Bayh



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Senator James Risch