

Two States

“The only resolution is for the aspirations of both sides to be met through two states, where Israelis and Palestinians each live in peace and security...That is in Israel's interest, Palestine's interest, America's interest, and the world's interest.” --President Barack Obama, June 4, 2009

There is today an international consensus that a two-state solution is the only viable resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The clear consensus around the world is that the most logical long-term resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict lies in the establishment of an independent Palestinian state living alongside a secure Israel, each with clearly demarcated and internationally recognized borders. Polls taken in the United States repeatedly find that the majority of American Jews support such a solution, and in June 2009, Prime Minister of Israel Benjamin Netanyahu joined the long list of Israeli leaders publicly endorsing a two-state solution. In response, Khaled Meshal, leader in exile of Hamas, stated that Hamas “has accepted a Palestinian state on the 1967 borders including East Jerusalem. This is Hamas's program regardless of the historic documents,” and in so stating, echoed the Palestinian Authority’s long-standing endorsement of a two-state solution. Reflecting the official PLO position, Fatah officially endorsed the principle of a two-state solution at its 2009 convention. Polls of Israelis and Palestinians continue to show solid majorities backing a negotiated agreement leading to a two-state resolution of the conflict.

A two-state solution is essential to Israel’s future as a Jewish and democratic state.

The demographic reality is that, for Israel to remain democratic and still retain its Jewish character, it cannot hold on to the occupied territories indefinitely. The West Bank is home to over 2.5 million Palestinians, with well over a million living in Gaza. It is only a matter of time, most experts agree, before Israeli Jews become a minority in an Israel that stretches beyond the 1967 borders.

The Jewish and Palestinian peoples both deserve to realize the right to self-determination.

One of the most powerful political ideologies of modernity is that of self-determination, the notion that every national group has the right to shape its destiny through its own political institutions, rather than being ruled by others. Inspired by these ideas, Jews reclaimed their identity as a nation in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, just as Palestinian Arabs were coming to similar conclusions about their own need for a nation state. Both groups deserve to achieve national self-determination, claimed as a right by peoples around the world – and neither is likely to accept a solution that would deny them that right.

Time is of the essence for a two-state solution.

The prolonged stalemate in negotiations, ongoing Israeli settlement expansion and settler violence, and Palestinian incitement and violence has bred discouragement among Israelis and Palestinians alike about the prospects for peace. It’s crucial that a two-state solution be achieved soon – the Obama administration’s steadfast commitment will play a vital role in getting the sides back on target, and moving forward toward true peace.

President Obama dedicated himself to making a two-state solution a priority from the very first day of his administration.

In President Obama, Israel has a stalwart ally, a leader committed to the ultimate goal of a secure Jewish State living in peace with all of its neighbors. The administration has committed resources, time, and its top people to securing peace through a two-state solution.