

TIME TO DISSOCIATE FROM ISRAELI POLICIES

We are Americans and Jews and we come together at this time publicly to express our strong desire to see the United States take meaningful steps to dissociate our country from the policies of Israel.

For some years we have witnessed Israel increasingly deviating from political policies that we find acceptable and from moral values that we hold dear. These developments are not the responsibility of any particular political party in Israel but rather stem, in our judgment, from a tragically misguided approach toward the Arab world in which Israel is located, a racist ideology and a growing militancy. We can no longer condone or be associated with such Israeli behavior, nor, do we believe, should our country.

In recent years Israel has twisted away from basic commitments made at Camp David in 1978; annexed further territories, including East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, while continuing to expand settlements in all the occupied territories; and grotesquely invaded Lebanon, resulting in the death of tens of thousands of Lebanese and Palestinians as well as hundreds of Israelis and Americans, and the taking as hostages of others.

Furthermore, Israeli policies and attitudes toward the Palestinian people have made it evident that only major changes in Israel's basic posture will allow for a peaceful political settlement with the Palestinians.

Israeli complicity in Irangate and Conragate coupled with Israel's employment of American Jews as spies against our country further underscore the growing dangers inherent in the current U.S.-Israeli relationship. The close identification in the public mind between Israel and Jews—an equation vigorously fostered by both the Zionist movement and the American Jewish lobby, which has come under its control—threatens to stigmatize Jews everywhere.

The recent acts of killings, beatings, curfews, expulsions and house arrests—all against unarmed Palestinians living in areas Israel has occupied for 20 years—further demonstrate that Israel has become a badly divided country with many unfortunate similarities to the situation that prevails in South Africa.

Our ancestors came to the United States because, as a result of their Jewishness, they were discriminated against and abused. The European experience culminated in the horrors of the Nazi Holocaust. How tragic that in our own time the very state established by Jews in the aftermath of this evil has become a place where racialism, religious discrimination, militarism and injustice prevail; and that Israel itself has become a pariah state within the world community. Events taking place today are all too reminiscent of the pogroms from which our own forefathers fled two and three generations ago—but this time

those in authority are Jews and the victims are Moslem and Christian Palestinians.

We believe that Israel's course could not be maintained but for the continuing financial, political, military and covert support of the U.S. government. And we fear that unless firm steps of disengagement from Israel are taken now our country might get dragged into a major war for which preparations are under way.

In addition, we believe that unless the United States takes serious steps to distance itself from Israel the Israelis will mistakenly continue to think that the course they are on is one acceptable to the American people.

For all these reasons we believe the time has come to *normalize* the U.S. relationship with Israel. A complete re-evaluation of what has become since 1967 the American sponsorship of Israel is required. The unprecedented amounts of economic aid should be cut back over the next two to three years to much smaller levels. Furthermore, the considerable military and intelligence assistance should also be radically reduced.

Unfortunately, during the years of the Reagan Administration much the opposite course has been followed, and Israel has practically become a ward of the United States. In this election year we urge an open debate about the serious problems and dangers which have resulted from the current structure of U.S.-Israeli relations. Few foreign policy issues are of such importance to our country. Consequently we urge our leading politicians to resist the widespread inhibitions from speaking up about Israel, inhibitions which result from the severe financial, political and ideological pressures often brought to bear against those who do.

We further believe that the time is overdue for negotiations between the Israeli government and the PLO, which is quite clearly the chosen representative for the great majority of Palestinians—negotiations that should quickly lead to a Palestinian state in the occupied territories and reasonable security guarantees for all parties. In the security guarantees we think our country

should participate; but no longer in the financing and supporting of the kinds of policies Israel has been pursuing. The continual oppression and denial of Palestinians of their right to self-determination is an injustice which has become intolerable not only to those demonstrating for their freedom in Jerusalem, the West Bank, Gaza and throughout Israel itself.

The citizens of Israel, of course, will ultimately choose their own country's destiny. But at the very least the citizens of the United States should stop financing and supporting policies that are contrary to the principles and values we hold precious as Americans and as Jews.

PLEASE JOIN US — WE NEED YOUR HELP

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STATEMENT
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We need our fellow American Jews to speak up with us at this time. And we need the support of everyone if we are to be able to continue our efforts and have an impact. Upon receiving your name and/or contribution you will be contacted by one of the group organizers. For further information: (202) 362-2096.

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