

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's
Letter to President Barack Obama

Dear Mr. President:

I hope this letter finds you doing very well. I know that it has been very cold in the Northeast part of the United States lately. I hope the snow and ice is not symbolic of our relationship. One piece of good news is that frigid and tough winters are usually followed by a magnificent and replenishing spring. In our country, where our seasons are tied to the Bible, we celebrate the onset of spring with the religious holiday of Passover

There has been much discussion, debate, and unfortunately criticism of the fact that I have accepted an invitation by Senate Majority Leader Boehner to address the United States Congress in March, shortly before the elections in Israel. There are those who say that you should have been consulted on this invitation, and others who say that it is the prerogative of your Congress to do as it wishes.

I have the very greatest respect for the United States government and the institution that Congress represents. As you know, the Jewish community in the Colonies and the Caribbean Islands played a major role in helping the United States achieve its independence. Your great nation and its system of government represents an unequalled lesson in freedom, integrity and democracy to all of the world. Under no circumstances would I offend you or undermine the position of any elected official in the great United States of America.

Hopefully you and those who serve in the legislature can work out your differences with respect to my speaking to Congress. That would be wonderful, because it would lead to a productive, useful and important meeting between you and me. We need to consult in this day and age, when Muslim fundamentalists and terrorists are beheading their opponents, burning people alive, and treating non-believers as though they may be tortured and butchered at will.

Why is it so important for me to accept the invitation to speak to your Congress about the nuclear ambitions of Iran, even if it means being perceived as a bit abrasive? The Jewish people just observed the 70th anniversary of the liberation of one of the German death camps, Auschwitz. For us, this is living history and not an archaic fossil relegated to the trash heap of history. As we say in the Haggadah, read at Passover, in every generation, there rises up another tyrant. The Jewish people know that all too well.

The Pharaoh in Egypt justified enslaving the Jews based on his fear that we would consort with his enemies, even though the Hebrews were a shepherd community which had proven loyal to the nation. Virtually every empire the world has known has taken its crack at decimating, destroying, and degrading the Jewish people. Although sustaining horrible losses, we have managed to survive and to contribute to the well-being of our planet.

As you know, perhaps even better than I, Iran has been unabating in its stated intention to promote the destruction of the State of Israel. The question is whether Iran will receive the means to

perpetrate another Holocaust, or whether the world will simply stand up and say “no.” For us this is not a matter of friendly negotiations, long-term consequences, or idle speculation. Consider the simple proposition; if you are right that Iran can be negotiated with and given more time to see the light, then the Jewish people will have feared for naught. If you are wrong, we will be reduced to rubble and ash. We simply cannot afford to trust Iran over the course of several more months. All of our intelligence, along with that of the Americans and other honest observers, indicate that Iran is on the threshold of a nuclear capacity. This can occur in weeks or months, while negotiations are ongoing.

We also all know the sanctions have worked. Iran is only negotiating now because of prior sanctions imposed. The free world must become energy independent and must stand together against fundamentalist terrorism whether it is state encouraged or whether it consists of trans-state groups like ISIL, Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Palestinian Liberation Organization.

I implore you to retract from the unpleasantries which have recently accompanied our relationship. I will do everything I can to work with you and to show respect for your office. At the same time, I think it is important that Congress hears what I have to say about Iran. I do not believe that our positions will be very far apart. You have been a terrific friend to Israel, as has Congress. Our appreciation for your efforts and those of past and present legislators should not be underestimated. We know what it means to have friends in the world, and we know what it means to be left isolated. We want and need the cordial and warm relationship which you have extended to us on so many occasions.

We hope that the current imbroglio will be put to rest soon. I look forward to coming to Washington, speaking to Congress, and meeting with you on a most friendly and productive basis.

Your Chaver,
Benjamin Netanyahu
Prime Minister
State of Israel

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