



**Ziad J. Asali, M.D.**

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# Resources on the American National Security Interest in Israeli-Palestinian Peace

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My colleagues and I founded the American Task Force on Palestine in 2003 with a clear, focused mission: to advocate that a negotiated end of conflict agreement that allows for two states, Israel and Palestine, to live side-by-side in peace and security is in the American national interest. Over the past seven years, we have been gratified by the development of the understanding that this is a vital

national interest for our country into a clear policy focus for our government and a growing consensus within the foreign policy establishment. It is also strongly supported by our partners in the Quartet on the Middle East, and is consistent with stated positions of the Arab League, the PLO and the government of Israel.

ATFP has compiled the following set of references that illustrates the growing consensus and focus on this issue in the US government, including senior congressional leaders. The first, shorter, document focuses specifically on statements emphasizing the vital importance of Israeli-Palestinian peace for the American national interest. A second, more comprehensive, list of resources covers a wider range of statements from US government leaders generally endorsing a two state solution on a variety of grounds. Our purpose is to illustrate the growth of this understanding in Washington over the past few years and the depth of US commitment to securing a negotiated two state agreement.

US government statements emphasizing the US national security interest in Israeli-Palestinian peace

## US Presidential Statements

- **Barak Obama:** Press Conference at the Nuclear Security Summit: "[It is a vital national security interest of the United States to reduce these conflicts.](#)" April 13, 2010

- **Barack Obama:** Remarks by the President on a new beginning: At Cairo University, the President says peace "[is in Israel's interest, Palestine's interest, America's interest, and the world's interest. And that is why I intend to personally pursue this outcome with all the patience and dedication that the task requires.](#)" June 4, 2009

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- **Barak Obama:** Remarks following a meeting with President Abbas and an exchange with reporters: "...the United States views our long-term strategic interests: a situation in which the Palestinians can prosper, they can start businesses; they can educate their children; they can send them to college; they can prosper economically." May 28, 2009

- **Barak Obama:** Remarks following a meeting with PM Netanyahu and an exchange with reporters: "...it is, I believe, in the interest not only of the Palestinians, but also the Israelis and the United States and the international community, to achieve a two-state solution in which Israelis and Palestinians are living side by side in peace and security." May 18, 2009

- **Barak Obama:** News Conference: "It is critical for us to advance a two-state solution where Israelis and Palestinians can live side by side in their own states with peace and security." March 24, 2009

- **George W. Bush:** Remarks at the Saban Forum: "I was the first American President to call for a Palestinian state and support--and build support for the two-state solution has been a top priority of my administration." December 5, 2008

- **George W. Bush:** Remarks at the World Economic Forum in Sharm el-Sheikh: "A peace agreement is in the Palestinians' interests; it is in Israel's interests; it is in Arab States' interests; and it is in the world's interests." May 18, 2008

- **George W. Bush:** Interview by Israel's Channel 10 TV: "...in this administration... we have placed American foreign policy - a top priority of our foreign policy is squarely in the Middle East..." May 12, 2008

#### US Senior Administration Statements

- **Susan E. Rice:** Speech at the Arab American Institute Annual Gala: "President Obama and all of us in his Administration are determined to reach a comprehensive peace in the Middle East--central to which is a two-state solution. President Obama has defined this goal as a vital U.S. interest." April 21, 2010

- **Joe Biden:** Speech at Tel Aviv University: "Building peace and security between a Jewish democratic state of Israel and a viable, independent Palestinian state is... fundamentally in the national security interest of the United States of America." March 11, 2010

- **Gen. James L. Jones:** Remarks at Fourth AAFP Gala: "The President is committed to achieving two states, Israel and Palestine, living side-by-side in peace and security... because he believes that peace is in America's interests, just as it is in the interests of the Palestinian and Israeli peoples." October 15, 2009

- **George Mitchell:** Cairo Speech: "...a comprehensive Middle East peace is not only in the interests of the people in the Middle East, of Palestinians, Israelis, Egyptians, Arabs from many other countries, but it is also in the national interests of the United States." April 19, 2009

- **Condoleezza Rice:** Testimony at the Committee on Foreign Relations House Hearing, 110th Congress: "The United States has enduring national interests in the Middle East, economic, geopolitical, security, and moral values. The Middle East is now and will remain one of the most strategically important parts of the world for our national interests and for international security." October 24, 2007

- **Nicholas Burns:** Keynote Address at Second AAFP Gala: "We view the creation of a Palestinian state to be not only in the interest of Palestinians, Israelis, and their neighbors, but also as a key American interest." October 17, 2007

- **Condoleezza Rice:** Keynote Address at AAFP Inaugural Gala: "...the creation of a Palestinian state ... would indeed strengthen peace and security, not just in the region but the peace and security of us all." "I can only tell you that I, too, have a personal commitment to that goal because I believe that there could be no greater legacy for America than to help to bring into being a Palestinian state for a people who have suffered too long, who have been humiliated too long, who have not reached their potential for too long, and who have so much to give to the international community and to all of us." October 11, 2006

#### Congressional Statements

- **Richard G. Lugar** (R-IN): Opening Statement at the Committee on Foreign Relations Senate Hearing, 109th Congress: "The advancement of the peaceful two-state solution ... is urgently needed ... and is critical to United States success in the global war on terrorism." June 30, 2005

- **Dianne Feinstein** (D-CA) and Richard Lugar (R-IN): S.R.224 - Israeli-Palestinian Peace Resolution: "A comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace agreement is in the national interest of the United States and should be a top priority in the region." June 7, 2007



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The Rand Paul Quote Everybody's Ignoring

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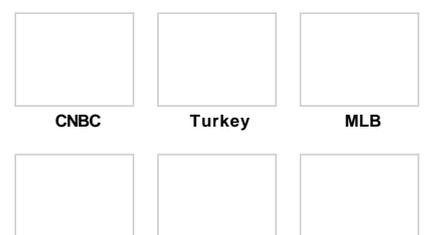
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- **Chuck Hagel** (R-NE): Speech at J-Street First National Conference: "[The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is central to U.S. vital security interests in combating terrorism.](#)" October 27, 2009

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## US government statements emphasizing support for a two-state solution

### US Presidential Statements

- **Barack Obama**: Press Conference at the Nuclear Security Summit: The President states that resolving conflicts such as the one between Israelis and Palestinians is a "[vital national security interest for the United States.](#)" April 13, 2010

- **Barack Obama**: Remarks at a Town Hall Meeting and Q&A Session in Tampa, Florida: [The President says from the beginning his Administration has been seeking a two-state solution.](#) January 28, 2010

- **Barack Obama**: Speech at the UN General Assembly: The President reaffirms that "[the goal is clear: two states living side by side in peace and security.](#)" September 23, 2009

- **Barack Obama**: Remarks on the observance of Ramadan: [The President highlights the need for peace in the Middle East through a two-state solution.](#) August 21, 2009

- **Barack Obama**: News Conference with President Sarkozy of France: [President Obama highlights the need for negotiations in support of a two-state solution.](#) June 6, 2009

- **Barack Obama**: News Conference with Chancellor Merkel of Germany: [The President highlights the importance of a two-state solution for Israeli, Palestinian and US national interests.](#) June 5, 2009

- **Barack Obama**: Interview by foreign journalists: [The President argues that both Palestinians and Israelis will recognize that a two-state solution is in both of their interests.](#) June 4, 2009

- **Barack Obama**: Remarks by the President on a new beginning: At Cairo University, the President says peace "[is in Israel's interest, Palestine's interest, America's interest, and the world's interest. And that is why I intend to personally pursue this outcome with all the patience and dedication that the task requires.](#)" June 4, 2009

- **Barack Obama**: Interview by NPR: [The President says negotiations towards a two-state solution will, in his view, lead to peace and meet the needs of both Palestinians and Israelis.](#) June 1, 2009

- **Barack Obama**: Remarks following a meeting with President Abbas and an exchange with reporters: [The President reiterates his support and strong belief the two-state solution would provide Palestinians and Israelis the peace and security they need.](#) May 28, 2009

- **Barack Obama**: Remarks following a meeting with PM Netanyahu and an exchange with reporters: [The President says peace is in the interests of all parties.](#) May 18, 2009

- **Barack Obama**: Remarks following a meeting with King Abdullah II and an exchange with reporters: [The President reiterates his position of strong support for a two-state solution.](#) April 21, 2009

- **Barack Obama**: News Conference: [The President says it is critical to advance a two-state solution.](#) March 24, 2009

- **George W. Bush**: News Conference: [The President emphasizes his support for the two-state solution.](#) January 12, 2009

- **George W. Bush**: Remarks at the Saban Forum: [The President states his Administration's support for a two-state solution has been a top priority.](#) December 5, 2008

- **George W. Bush**: News Conference with President Sarkozy of France: [President Bush reiterates his role as the first US president to formally endorse a two-state solution.](#) June 14, 2008

- **George W. Bush**: Remarks at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development: [The President affirms his support for and commitment to a two-state solution and his determination to stand with Palestinians and Israelis who support his position.](#) June 13, 2008

- **George W. Bush**: Remarks at the World Economic Forum in Sharm el-Sheikh: President Bush says he would stand with the Palestinian people, "[who have suffered for decades and earned the](#)

right to have a homeland of their own." May 18, 2008

- **George W. Bush:** Interview by Egypt's Dream TV: [The interview highlights President's role as the first US president to articulate a two-state solution.](#) May 12, 2008

- **George W. Bush:** Interview by Israel's Channel 10 TV: [The President reiterates support for the two-state solution.](#) May 12, 2008

- **George W. Bush:** Interview by Al Arabiya Television: [The President states that Iran and others are trying to hinder the realization of the two-state solution.](#) May 12, 2008

- **George W. Bush:** Interview by BBC Arabic: [The President emphasizes his support for the two-state solution.](#) May 12, 2008

- **George W. Bush:** Remarks following a meeting with President Mubarak of Egypt: [The President reiterates his belief that the leadership of Israel and the Palestinians are committed to a two-state solution.](#) January 16, 2008

- **George W. Bush:** News Conference with President Abbas of the Palestinian Authority: [The President reiterates his position in support of a two-state solution.](#) January 10, 2008

- **George W. Bush:** Remarks following a meeting with President Gul of Turkey: [The President reiterates his position in support of a two-state solution.](#) January 8, 2008

- **George W. Bush:** Interview by Channel 2 News: [The President reiterates his position in support of a two-state solution.](#) January 4, 2008

- **George W. Bush:** Remarks at the Annapolis Conference: [The President announces each party's commitment to implement their respective obligations under the Roadmap.](#) November 27, 2007

- **George W. Bush:** Letter from the President to ATFP Second Gala: [The President writes about his Administration's active engagement in pursuit of a two-state solution.](#) October 17, 2007

- **George W. Bush:** 'Making America Safer by Defeating Extremists in the Middle East' Fact Sheet: [The President emphasizes vital US interests in the Middle East and reiterates his commitment to the two-state solution.](#) August 28, 2007

- **George W. Bush:** Remarks on the Middle East: [The President calls for an international meeting in support of the two-state solution.](#) July 16, 2007

- **George W. Bush:** Remarks following discussions with President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority: [The President says he believes peace will come through two democratic states living side by side.](#) September 20, 2006

- **George W. Bush:** United States-European Union Summit Joint Declaration: [The parties reaffirm their dedication to promote a negotiated solution to the conflict and to advance a just, viable and lasting two-state solution.](#)

June 21, 2006

- **George W. Bush:** News Conference With President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority: [The President emphasizes the mutual responsibilities of the parties and reasserts US commitment to the two-state solution throughout the final status negotiations.](#)

May 26, 2005

- **George W. Bush:** Statement on the Israeli Disengagement Plan and the Middle East Peace Process: [The President reiterates that the two-state solution is the key to peace.](#) April 14, 2004

- **George W. Bush:** Rose Garden Speech at the White House on Israel-Palestine Two-State Solution: For the first time, a US President endorses "[two states, living side by side in peace and security.](#)" June 24, 2002

### US Senior Administration Statements

- **Susan E. Rice:** Speech at the Arab American Institute Annual Gala: "[President Obama and all of us in his Administration are determined to reach a comprehensive peace in the Middle East--central to which is a two-state solution. President Obama has defined this goal as a vital U.S. interest.](#)" April 21, 2010

- **Hillary Clinton:** Speech at the Center for Middle East Peace: The Secretary highlights that the "[US supports two tracks... reaching a two-state solution and also institution building.](#)" April 15, 2010

- **Hillary Clinton:** Speech at The American Israel Public Affairs Committee: [The Secretary reasserts that the two-state solution is the only viable path to peace.](#) March 22, 2010

- **Joe Biden:** Interview by Al Jazeera: [The Vice President endorses a two-state solution and says the status-quo is not beneficial to either side.](#) March 11, 2010
- **Hillary Clinton:** Speech at the U.S.-Islamic World Forum: [The Secretary says comprehensive peace in the Middle East requires a two-state solution.](#) February 14, 2010
- **Joe Biden:** Speech at Tel Aviv University: [The Vice President applauds PM Netanyahu's acceptance of the principle of two states and reaffirms the US commitment to the two-state solution.](#) March 11, 2010
- **Gen. James L. Jones:** Remarks at Fourth ATFP Gala: [The NSA says the President is personally committed to achieving two states.](#) October 15, 2009
- **George Mitchell:** Press Briefing on the President's Trilateral Meeting with PM Netanyahu and President Abbas: [The Special Envoy highlights Israeli and Palestinian needs for comprehensive peace through a two-state solution.](#) September 22, 2009
- **Robert Gibbs:** Press Briefing: [The Press Secretary emphasizes the Obama Administration's position about the necessity of a two-state solution.](#) May 18, 2009
- **Joe Biden:** Remarks at the Annual Policy Conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee: [The Vice President talks about the President's commitment to a two-state solution.](#) May 5, 2009
- **Robert Gibbs:** Press Briefing: [The Press Secretary reiterates the position of the Obama Administration on a sustained effort for a two-state solution.](#) May 4, 2009
- **George Mitchell:** Cairo Speech: [The Special Envoy says comprehensive peace requires a solution based upon two-states.](#) April 19, 2009
- **James Glassman:** Remarks at Third ATFP Gala: [The Under-Secretary reiterates Administration's commitment to the two-state solution, and reads a letter from President Bush.](#) October 12, 2008
- **Stephen Hadley:** Press Briefing on President's speech in Sharm-el-Sheikh: [The National Security Advisor reiterates of President Bush's strong commitment to the establishment of a Palestinian state.](#) May 18, 2008
- **Stephen Hadley:** Press Briefing on President's trip to the ME: [The NSA highlights the President's support for a two-state solution.](#) May 7, 2008
- **Stephen Hadley:** Press Briefing on Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process: [The NSA describes how the Bush Administration is supporting a two-state solution.](#) January 10, 2008
- **Stephen Hadley:** Remarks on the Middle East and Freedom Agenda: [The NSA talks about the US commitment to the two-state solution.](#) November 28, 2007
- **Condoleezza Rice:** Testimony at the Committee on Foreign Relations House Hearing, 110th Congress: [The Secretary reaffirms the Administration's commitment to the establishment of a successful Palestinian state.](#) October 24, 2007
- **Nicholas Burns:** Keynote Address at Second ATFP Gala: [The Undersecretary talks about the Administration's commitment to the two-state solution.](#) October 17, 2007
- **Condoleezza Rice:** Press Conference: [The Secretary says the key is to continue down the road towards a two-state solution.](#) March 25, 2007
- **Condoleezza Rice:** Keynote Address at ATFP Inaugural Gala: The Secretary says "I believe that there could be no greater legacy for America than to help to bring into being a Palestinian state." October 11, 2006
- **Condoleezza Rice:** Interview by Al Arabiya: [The NSA reaffirms the President's commitment to the two-state solution.](#) May 3, 2004
- **Colin Powell:** On-The-Record Briefing: [The Secretary states the Administration is committed to a two-state solution.](#) January 8, 2004

#### **Congressional Statements**

- **Diane Feinstein** (D-CA): Feinstein says Hezbollah may have scud missiles: Senator Feinstein says "there is only one thing that's going to solve [dangers for Israel], and that's a two-state solution." April 21, 2010
- **John Kerry** (D-MA): Opening Statement at the Committee on Foreign Relations Senate Hearing, 111th Congress: [The Senator reaffirms that two-state solution remains the only workable and just solution.](#) March 4, 2010

- **Howard Berman** (D-CA): Remarks to Americans for Peace Now: [The Chairman talks about the need to bring the two parties together in order to advance the two-state solution.](#) January 24, 2010
- **Chuck Hagel** (R-NE): Speech at J-Street First National Conference: The Senator stresses that "[now is the time when we must aggressively drive toward a two-state solution.](#)" October 27, 2009
- **John Kerry** (D-MA), **Richard Lugar** (R-IN), **Russ Feingold** (D-WI): Briefing of Statements at the Committee on Foreign Relations Senate Hearing, 111th Congress: The Senators state that "[no workable alternative to the two-state solution](#)" and that "[the United States has felt for a long time the two-state settlement is the best idea.](#)" May 15, 2009
- **Rep. Steve Cohen** (D-TN), **Rep. Charles Boustany** (R-LA) and **Rep. Russ Carnahan** (D-MO): Letter to President BarackObama: [The Representatives underline that resolving conflicts, and in particular, finally implementing a two-state solution, is essential for American interests in the Middle East and around the world.](#) May 13, 2009
- **John Kerry** (D-MA): Speech on the Middle East at the Brookings Institute: The Senator confirms that "[we all know what it's going to take: two states living side by side in peace and security.](#)" March 9, 2009
- **Rep. Gary Ackerman** (D-NY): Press Statement: [The Chairman reaffirms that peace and security will only come with the two-state solution.](#) March 2, 2009
- **John Kerry** (D-MA): Opening Statement at the Committee on Foreign Relations Senate Hearing, 110th Congress: [The Senator stresses the importance of a two-state solution and an increase in US efforts to support it.](#) September 25, 2008
- **Rep. Gary Ackerman** (D-NY): Statement at the Committee on Foreign Relations House Hearing, 110th Congress: [The Chairman says Palestinians are ready for a two-state solution.](#) December 5, 2007
- **Chris Dodd** (D-CT): Interview by CNN Late Edition: The Senator says: "[Nothing would please me more than to have a two-state solution here.](#)" December 2, 2007
- **Chuck Hagel** (R-NE): Interview by the Council on Foreign Relations: The Senator says the US has strong interest in getting to "[what everybody says they believe is the answer, and that's a two-state solution.](#)" November 28, 2007
- **Dianne Feinstein** (D-CA) and **Richard Lugar** (R-IN): S.R.224 - Israeli-Palestinian Peace Resolution: [Senators Feinstein and Lugar reaffirm American support for a two-state solution and urge President Bush to appoint a high-level peace negotiator to revive peace talks between the parties.](#) June 7, 2007
- **Chuck Hagel** (R-NE): Speech at the US Senate, 109th Congress: [The Senator talks about the importance of a two-state solution in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.](#) July 31, 2006
- **Carl Levin** (D-MI): Remarks at ATFP Inaugural Gala: [The Senator speaks about the importance of establishing a Palestinian state alongside Israel.](#) October 11, 2006
- **John Sununu** (R-NH): Remarks at ATFP Inaugural Gala: [The Senator speaks about the need to expand public diplomacy vis-à-vis the two-state solution.](#) October 11, 2006
- **Richard G. Lugar** (R-IN): Opening Statement at the Committee on Foreign Relations Senate Hearing, 109th Congress: [The Senator says the advancement of the two-state solution is "urgently needed."](#) June 30, 2005
- **Joe Biden** (D-DE): Opening Statement at the Committee on Foreign Relations Senate Hearing, 109th Congress Senate Hearing: [The Senator says the US should support Israeli disengagement and Palestinian institution building in order to advance the two-state solution.](#) June 30, 2005

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**BlakeVanderwall** 04:13 PM on 5/21/2010

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This is all well and good, but until Hamas, a radical islamic fundamentalist organization that wants to destroy Israel and was voted by the Palestinian majority as their presentatives, changes their view and really wants peace alongside the Jewish state of Israel, none of this matters, and discussions between Israel and other people are pointless and won't advance anything

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**lbsaltzman** 34 minutes ago (4:51 PM)



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A Palestinian minority voted for Hamas, they just got a plurality not a majority of votes. Those votes came out of frustration at the inability of Fatah to make headway. Even if Hamas folded up its operations tomorrow, Israel will find ways to provoke the Palestinians into more armed resistance. Israel doesn't want peace!

I applaud any effort to bring about a two state solution and this effort seems admirable.

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