

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 27, 2020

The Honorable Michael Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

As a friend and supporter of Israel, I would like to pass along my concern with certain provisions in Israel's unity government agreement that allow for consideration of unilateral annexation of Palestinian territory as early as July 1st. I am concerned about the implications if Prime Minister Netanyahu continues to seek out unilateral annexation of territory in the West Bank, and I urge you to caution our close friends and allies in Israel to reconsider this course of action.

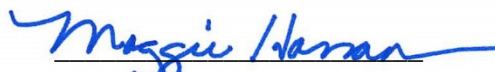
The United States and Israel have built an unshakeable alliance founded on shared security interests and deeply shared values based in peace and democracy. In 2018, I had the opportunity to travel to Israel for the first time. I was struck by the vibrancy of Israeli culture and the energy and spirit of this democratic nation. I also gained a deeper understanding of the safety and security concerns that face the Israeli people, and I remain deeply committed to confronting these critical challenges.

The United States must continue to be Israel's strongest and most dependable ally while helping it to secure an enduring peace through bilateral negotiations toward a two-state solution. Long-standing American policy has opposed unilateral actions by either party because changing the status quo without negotiations will ultimately make it more difficult to secure a lasting peace agreement.

Israel has a right and an obligation to secure its borders, but annexing key territories without bilateral communication and support will only serve to increase the animosity of extremist actors like Hamas and decrease the willingness of Palestinian groups to come to the negotiating table. Such actions undermine decades of shared understandings between Israeli, Palestinian, American, and international officials.

I believe that the United States can and must play an indispensable role in bringing both sides to the negotiating table, and I urge you to share my concerns with the leadership of the Israeli government. As the Middle East and the world confront the turmoil caused by a global pandemic and an uncertain future, our commitment to Israel is now more essential than ever. I encourage you to support Israel's peace, security, and prosperity by working to help encourage bipartisan negotiations that can one day help lead to a two-state solution.

With every good wish,



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator