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4 July 2024

Hon. Rep. Jimmy Panetta  
U.S. House of Representatives  
304 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**Re: Request That You Boycott the Appearance of Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and Support Peace and Human Rights for All in the Middle East**

Dear Representative Panetta,

I write to urge you to boycott the scheduled address by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to the U.S. Congress on July 24, 2024.

First, I want you to know that I unequivocally denounce the Hamas attack on innocent Israeli civilians on October 7, 2023 as well as the subsequent disproportionate attacks on innocent Palestinian civilians that have occurred every day since October 7, 2023.

As a human rights attorney, I have worked internationally to enforce international humanitarian and human rights law. That has included work in Israel and the West Bank. I also worked to convene dialogues in Amman, Jordan between Israeli and Palestinian students. My work in the West Bank was on behalf of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), where I conducted trade negotiation simulations based on a two-state solution and development of international trade policy between and among Palestinian, Israeli, and other regional state partners.

Since October 7<sup>th</sup> and the killing by Hamas of over 1,200 Israelis, more than 38,000 Palestinians have been killed, including more than 13,800 children.

In May, 2024, the International Criminal Court's prosecutor requested arrest warrants for Mr. Netanyahu and leaders of Hamas, citing "intentional attacks on civilians" and the use of "starvation as a means of warfare".

As Senator Bernie Sanders cited, "What we are seeing now is starvation and famine impacting thousands and thousands of children. The architect of that policy is not somebody you honor by bringing to the United States Congress."

You have joined President Biden in calling upon the Israeli prime minister to support a cease-fire in Gaza. That appeal has been joined by hundreds of other world leaders and elected representatives along with hundreds of thousands of Israeli citizens. The Prime Minister has ignored those appeals and has vowed to continue the war against Gaza, which has included the targeting of civilians. This disproportionate and illegal means of indiscriminate killing cannot and should not be rewarded by offering a podium in the U.S. Congress to Prime Minister Netanyahu.

There exists an inherent contradiction in our government's foreign policy that continues to supply the weapons of war to Israel, which are being used to slaughter innocent civilians while at the same time mobilizing humanitarian aid to the surviving victims of those weapons. For the U.S. government to have to construct a special landing dock on the coastline of Gaza to supply humanitarian supplies to the millions of displaced war victims because the Israeli government will not allow land-based shipments to cross its borders with Gaza represents a ludicrous paradigm.

I would ask that you join Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi; respected House leaders Jim Clyburn and Ro Khanna; and Senators Warren, Sanders, Van Hollen and others in boycotting the presentation of Prime Minister Netanyahu.

It is important to note that many Middle East experts and observers, including respected Israeli and Palestinian leaders have denounced Prime Minister Netanyahu's war strategy and tactics as dangerous to the future security of Israel. The steps to peace in the Middle East must include:

- 1) An immediate cease-fire in Gaza and the West Bank including the release of all Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners;
- 2) A call for an international summit to establish a path to a two-state solution;
- 3) An immediate multi-state plan to provide essential food supplies including water, healthcare (including medicines, generators, and fuel), and the rebuilding of housing and infrastructure;
- 4) The immediate cessation of the continued expansion of Israeli settlements which are being established in violation of international law in the West Bank; and
- 5) The conditioning of future U.S. military support to Israel on the adoption of these fundamental principles rooted in international law.

The above-listed steps to achieve peace in the Middle East have been embraced by Palestinians and Israelis alike. It is the single-minded obstinance of the Prime Minister that has made a path to peace unattainable and the future security of Israel and the region more precarious.

By refusing to honor the presence of Prime Minister Netanyahu before the U.S. Congress, you can also reaffirm your continued strong support for the State of Israel and the human rights of all inhabitants of the region.

It is in times of crisis that politicians are called upon to exercise their moral authority knowing that it may be unpopular with some, but will serve to advance the cause of peace and fundamental respect for the Rule of Law, including international human rights law and the laws of armed conflict. In fact, it was the U.S. government that helped to craft and promote these international rules of war and humanitarian law at the Nuremberg Trials after World War II and which have been embraced and codified through the United Nations, the World Court, and the International Criminal Court.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and I look forward to hearing back from you as to your position at this critical and historic moment.

Sincerely,

*s/ Bill Monning*

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