

OGDEN WILLIAMS

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Dear Mr. Secretary,

I am taking the liberty, as a fellow classmate of Princeton '42, to convey to you the substance of a letter I have just sent to the Washington Post, for whatever interest it may have:

"Israel's policy of denying to Palestinians the same status and rights that it rightly demands for itself can only lead to endless trouble. And not only for Israel but for America as well, since we are perceived by the entire world as being the captive underwriters of whatever Israel does.

"Our politicians seem to find it more dangerous to oppose Israel's policies than to neglect U.S. interests. All this could come home to roost one day, when Israel's policies create such an accumulation of international opposition that Israel may be faced, for the first time, with actual defeat. Then we would surely see the "special relationship" invoked to draw U.S. troops into a Middle East quagmire without a single other ally in sight. Or alternatively, Israel might decide, however reluctantly, to use its nuclear weapons as a last resort. To avert such horrors we must simply insist on a just solution of the Palestine problem without delay, and we have, as the underwriter of Israel since its birth, every right to do so."

I did not add that we also have the power or influence to do so. Our annual multi-billion dollar subsidy of Israel comes to mind as a pressure point. It would seem that our power to influence Israel is not in question, but rather our power or willingness to stand up to our own special interests.

Surely what we would demand of Israel would not be unjust - simply to grant the Palestinians what Israel already has, a homeland, borders internationally recognized, and self-rule. These things are consistent with human rights everywhere. Israel would only have to give up its imperialistic policies in the occupied territories, which a segment of respectable Israeli opinion already wants to do. The rewards of such action would be immense for all concerned: For the Palestinians the realization of a dream they will never give up. For Israel a greater degree of security and international goodwill, and for the U.S. an end to the intolerable status of being an impotent hostage to Israeli policies we do not control.

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Mr. Secretary, surely the American people and such allies as we have in the world have waited long enough for us to take the reasonable steps necessary to put an end to this endless Palestinian problem. Surely Israel's most loyal supporters in the U.S. cannot forever deny to the Palestinians the very rights and freedoms which they so rightly demand for Israel itself. I believe that the overwhelming balance of international opinion regards us as being ultimately responsible for the perpetuation of this endless injustice, since they see us as having the power to stop it if we chose to do so. Could not action at this time to bite this bullet once and for all be regarded as the crowning achievement of this Administration and its greatest contribution to the cause of world peace ?

I realize that I write in the theoretical world, while you and the President live in the real one. Further, you may simply disagree with what I have presumed to write here. Still, I would be enormously appreciative if you would at least read this letter and give it any consideration you think it deserves.

Respectfully,

*Ogden Williams*

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