

AIPAC WELCOMES RENEWAL OF DIRECT PEACE TALKS

Calls on Palestinians, Arab States to Match Israel's Commitment to Peace

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 20, 2010

Contact: Josh Block jblock@aipac.org

AIPAC welcomes the renewal of direct peace talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA), as announced Friday by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and expresses its appreciation to the Obama administration for its efforts in making this goal a reality.

Sitting together, face-to-face, leader-to-leader in direct negotiations is the only path to achieving the ultimate goal of peace, reconciliation and the end of all claims. AIPAC shares the administration's hope that the September meeting in Washington will serve as a step toward fulfilling Israel's historic unrelenting quest for peace with the Palestinians and all its Arab neighbors.

For over six decades, Israel has consistently offered its hand in peace, demonstrating again and again its willingness to make real and heartrending sacrifices – altering borders, relinquishing territory, uprooting families and entire communities – in the pursuit of peace.

For talks to succeed the PA must match Israel's commitment to conducting peace talks without preconditions or excuses, abandon its longstanding attempts to avoid making difficult choices at the negotiating table and cease incitement against Israel at home and abroad. Likewise, Arab states must heed the calls by the Obama Administration and Congress to take immediate and meaningful steps toward normalization with Israel, and they must provide the political support for the Palestinians to make the kind of significant and difficult choices that will be required.

In recent months, Israel's prime minister has reaffirmed the Jewish state's commitment to peace, going further than any previous Israeli government, making tangible risks for peace and taking dramatic steps to improve the everyday lives of Palestinian civilians in the West Bank. As President Obama stated, "I believe that Prime Minister Netanyahu wants peace. I think he's willing to take risks for peace."

Israel's latest gestures underscore the Jewish state's unyielding commitment to achieving peace with the Palestinians and all of its Arab neighbors. They also provide a deep expression of Israeli confidence in American diplomacy and Israeli dedication to cooperation with the United States in the pursuit of peace in the Middle East.

Now it is time – well past time – for the Palestinians and the Arab States to grasp Israel's outstretched hand and to match the Jewish state's unyielding commitment to peace with actions of their own.

###