



October 12, 2023

The Honorable Ben Cardin
Chair
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
509 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jim Risch
Ranking Member
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
483 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Cardin and Ranking Member Risch:

On behalf of American Jewish Committee (AJC), I write to urge in the strongest possible terms the swift review and confirmation of Jack Lew as Ambassador to Israel. This urgent request comes on the heels of the worst attack on Israel since the 1973 Yom Kippur War. The United States Government should ensure it has the highest level of government representation in Israel while our greatest ally in the Middle East undergoes its most challenging test in over 50 years.

At 6:30 a.m., October 7, Hamas, the Iran-backed terror group controlling Gaza, launched an unprovoked and vicious surprise attack on Israel, storming communities and homes, kidnapping and massacring civilians. Since the attack began, reports confirm at least 1300 Israelis have been murdered along with at least 25 U.S. citizens, more than 200 people have been kidnapped, over 3,000 people have been wounded, with hundreds in critical condition, and more than 5,000 rockets have been fired against Israeli towns and civilians. More than five days after Hamas attacked Israel, we are still coming to terms with the absolute barbarism and inhumanity inflicted against innocent Israelis- including children, the elderly, parents, and entire families. This brutality brings a renewed sense of urgency for American representation in Israel as it seeks to defend its citizens at this critical moment in time.

Israel is a major strategic partner as well as our strongest democratic ally in the Middle East region. As Israel fights for its future, the U.S. must continue to stand steadfast alongside our partner. We must continue to unequivocally condemn Hamas's acts of terror and we must also not lose sight of the peace and prosperity Israel seeks with its Arab neighbors. There is vital work ahead for this ambassador and a prolonged vacancy sends a compromising signal to our common adversaries that seek death and destruction over peace and prosperity. Additionally, with 25 Americans killed in this act of terror, and at least 17 unaccounted for, the absence of an ambassador hinders the ability of the United States to represent its citizens during an evolving crisis. An active ambassador on the ground in Israel is crucial to ensure the United States can effectively pursue our foreign policy objectives, support our ally, and assert strong global leadership. Jack Lew's distinguished record of public service makes him an exceptional nominee for this position.

As Israel recovers from this ruthless and unparalleled act of terror within its borders, we implore you to move expeditiously on filling this critical ambassadorial post. We enthusiastically support Jack Lew's nomination to be U.S. Ambassador to Israel and with a great sense of urgency urge his speedy confirmation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out. Thank you for the consideration of our views.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ted Deutch". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ted" and last name "Deutch" clearly legible.

Ted Deutch
Chief Executive Officer
American Jewish Committee
Edward and Sandra Meyer Office of the CEO