

April 11, 2018

On behalf of the Union for Reform Judaism, whose nearly 900 congregations across North America encompass 1.5 million Reform Jews, and the Central Conference of American Rabbis, which represents over 2,000 Reform rabbis, we submit these questions regarding the nomination of Mike Pompeo as Secretary of State. We urge committee members to make use of them during the nomination hearing.

The Reform Movement is the largest denomination in American Jewish life and believes firmly that all people are created *b'tzelem Elohim*, in the image of the Divine (Genesis 1:27). This animates our deep commitment to defending the human rights of all individuals, regardless of national origin.

### *Human Rights and Civil Liberties*

1. Brigitte Gabriel, who directs ACT for America—an organization that the Anti-Defamation League has described as “the largest anti-Muslim group in America” that spreads “hateful propaganda”<sup>1</sup>—called you a “steadfast ally” of her group.<sup>2</sup> In 2007, Gabriel said, “If a Muslim who has—who is—a practicing Muslim who believes the word of the Koran to be the word of Allah, who abides by Islam, who goes to mosque and prays every Friday, who prays five times a day—this practicing Muslim, who believes in the teachings of the Koran, cannot be a loyal citizen to the United States of America.”<sup>3</sup> In 2016, you accepted the group’s “highest honor.”<sup>4</sup> Do you agree with Gabriel’s

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.adl.org/resources/profiles/act-for-america>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.actforamerica.org/bgeoy>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/03/americas-most-anti-muslim-activist-is-welcome-at-the-white-house/520323/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.actforamerica.org/bgeoy>

Islamophobic view of Muslims? How do your views of Islam impact the worldview on which you will rely as America's chief diplomat?

2. The Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism advances U.S. foreign policy by developing and implementing policies and projects to combat anti-Semitism. Under the Global Anti-Semitism Review Act of 2004 (22 U.S. Code § 2731), the Secretary of State is required by law to appoint a Special Envoy. The Secretary of State is also required to establish and maintain an Office to Monitor and Combat anti-Semitism, to be led by the Special Envoy. The Special Envoy position has remained vacant since the beginning of the Trump Administration. Will you commit to filling this role?
3. Since August 2017, nearly 700,000 Rohingya refugees have fled violence and ethnic cleansing in the Rakhine State, a region on the western border of Burma. The Rohingya are an ethnic Muslim minority in Burma who have historically faced persecution in the region. In late 2017, the Burmese military escalated violence against the Rohingya people, including the burning of villages and mass murders of entire communities. This crisis has quickly become the world's fastest growing refugee emergency. What role do you envision playing in addressing ethnic cleansing in Burma and supporting the survival, safety, and dignity of the Rohingya people?
4. As a country founded on religious freedom, the United States has a unique moral voice and role to play in defending religious freedom for all. Religious freedom is a human right, and the United States affirmed this right when it supported the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The United States has upheld this commitment to international religious freedom through the establishment of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom and the appointment of a United States Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom. What will you do to strengthen these institutions and defend religious freedom internationally?
5. The U.S. Department of State's Office of Global Women's Issues is key to advancing and empowering women and girls worldwide by addressing violence against women and promoting economic, political and social equality. In what ways will you support the work of the Office of Global Women's Issues, and what are your priorities for promoting women's empowerment internationally?
6. The current global refugee crisis is the most severe crisis of its kind since World War II, with over 65 million people displaced around the globe. Large-scale conflicts in places like Syria, Iraq, and South Sudan have completely disrupted daily life, leading to a scarcity of resources that has forced millions to flee their homes. Roughly 50 percent of these displaced people are children under the age of 18, who spend months or years in

refugee camps without access to regular education.<sup>5</sup> The United States has a legacy of welcoming refugees, and we have a moral obligation to open our doors safely and securely to the vulnerable and needy. The Administration has reduced the refugee admission cap to 45,000 refugees for fiscal year 2018 and has enacted executive orders that restrict travel from predominantly Muslim-majority countries.<sup>6</sup> The scope of the global refugee crisis demands far greater action from the United States. What will you do to protect and strengthen the nation's refugee resettlement program? How will you strengthen the U.S.'s legacy as a global leader and support non-discriminatory refugee resettlement policies?

7. In 2016, you called the Guantanamo Bay detention center a "goldmine of intelligence."<sup>7</sup> Guantanamo Bay, in which the United States indefinitely holds prisoners accused of crimes without due process and subjected prisoners to torture in order to procure intelligence, remains open. Do you support the indefinite detention of prisoners without due process? Do you believe in any limits to such detention? What role do you believe diplomacy should play in the United States' efforts to counter violent extremism and fight terrorism?

### *Israel*

1. The United States has been a steadfast friend and ally to Israel since its founding in 1948. Democratic and Republican administrations alike have advanced U.S. interests and bolstered a key partner by strengthening Israel as it meets the security and economic challenges of the day. What do you see as the core principles of the U.S.-Israel relationship?
2. The United States has taken a vital role in facilitating peace negotiations between Israel and her neighbors, including those which resulted in the Camp David accord, peace between Israel and Jordan, and the Oslo agreement. The U.S. strengthens Israel's security and advances its own national interest in the region through robust military aid: In September 2016, the United States and Israel agreed to a Memorandum of

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<sup>5</sup> [Doctors Without Borders, "Fall 2016 Alert. Forced From Home: Stories of Displacement From Around the Globe."](#)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.politico.com/story/2017/09/26/trump-refugee-cap-limit-243167>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/03/mike-pompeo-muslims-torture-guantanamo-bay-180313145408365.html>

Understanding to provide \$38 billion to Israel over the next ten years.<sup>8</sup> What will be your key priorities for the U.S.-Israel relationship?

3. The two-state solution is widely accepted as the only way to maintain Israel's Jewish and democratic character.<sup>9</sup> A one-state solution would force Israel to maintain its status as a Jewish state at the price of forfeiting its democratic nature. As Israel's closest ally and a major provider of aid for both Israel and the Palestinian Authority, the United States has historically taken a leadership role in brokering peace negotiations between the two parties. What are your goals for addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?
4. The presence and growth of settlements over the Green Line are a key issue within peace negotiations. How would you direct U.S. negotiations on the peace process regarding settlements? How would you direct U.S. policy on the other final status issues of Jerusalem, refugees, borders, and security?
5. U.S. economic aid to the Palestinian Authority provides support for strengthening civil society. That in turn fosters stability and the provision of services, including education and health care, to the Palestinian people. In January, President Trump threatened to cut this aid. What do you think the role of this aid is, and what in your view are the benefits to continuing U.S. aid to the PA?<sup>10</sup>
6. The United States cut funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) by 83 percent earlier this year. This decision jeopardizes UNRWA services upon which millions of Palestinian refugees rely.<sup>11</sup> How do you see the cutting of funding to the UNRWA as affecting peace negotiations?<sup>12</sup>
7. President Trump has announced the relocation of the U.S. embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.<sup>13</sup> How do you intend to ensure that this move does not further damage an already ailing peace process?
8. For any negotiations to move forward, both partners must be prepared to engage in difficult discussions and to address the most pressing concerns. The Palestinian Authority's decision to take unilateral action at the UN violates the principle that peace must be directly negotiated between the two parties. How do you plan to hold the PA

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<sup>8</sup> [The White House, "Fact Sheet: Memorandum of Understanding Reached with Israel."](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Brookings, "Two States, Four Paths for Achieving Them."](#)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.apnews.com/014efbb86511429d9c09c818a76f58e0>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.unrwausa.org/fund-unrwa/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/16/us/politics/us-palestinian-aid-refugee-un.html>

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/19/world/middleeast/jerusalem-us-embassy-trump.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/19/world/middleeast/jerusalem-us-embassy-trump.html?_r=0)

accountable for its responsibilities to the peace process and to facilitate conditions that foster Israel having a partner for peace?

9. The United Nations has a long and troubling record of hostility toward Israel. Resolutions that target Israel for undue scrutiny, such as the 2016 Security Council Resolution 2334 regarding the legality of settlements, are harmful to the peace process. Former Secretary General of the UN, Ban Ki-moon, has stated that the disproportionate number of Security Council resolutions targeting Israel have “foiled the ability of the UN to fulfill its duty effectively.”<sup>14</sup> In October 2016, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) passed a motion denying a Jewish connection to the Temple Mount and recognizing the site as holy for only the Islamic faith. In December 2017, the UN Security Council approved a measure “expressing deep regret at recent decisions concerning the status of Jerusalem” that the United States immediately vetoed.<sup>15</sup> How will you use this nation’s influence at the UN and on the international stage to ensure that Israel is treated fairly in these and other international forums?
10. As an issue of existential importance for Jews worldwide, opinions on Israel within the Jewish community are diverse, and debate is active. For this reason, it is important that the State Department, and particularly the U.S. Ambassador to Israel, maintain open and active dialogue with all organizations representing major constituencies of American Jews. How will you foster this dialogue? How do you plan to engage representatives of Jewish organizations working from a variety of perspectives on issues related to Israel?

### *Iran*

1. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action represented a significant effort from the United States and the other permanent members of the Security Council plus Germany to address Iran’s nuclear weapons program. The agreement provides for regular inspections of Iran’s nuclear facilities, which the UN asserts has so far have shown compliance with the terms of the JCPOA.<sup>16</sup> You called the agreement an

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/ban-ki-moon-united-nations-disproportionate-israel-focus-resolutions-palestinians-human-rights-danny-a7481961.html>

<sup>15</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2017/12/640152-general-assembly-demands-all-states-comply-un-resolutions-regarding-status>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-nuclear-amano-idUSKBN147083>

“unconscionable arrangement.”<sup>17</sup> What is your view of the JCPOA’s effectiveness thus far? Do you plan to advocate for the United States to continue its commitments under the Plan? What will you do to ensure that all parties to the JCPOA maintain their obligations under the deal going forward? If you do not believe the JCPOA should be maintained, how do you intend to address the challenge of Iran’s nuclear ambitions?

### *Climate Change*

1. In 2013, you said that you believe the “the science needs to continue to develop” on climate change.”<sup>18</sup> Do you acknowledge the scientific evidence and the broad consensus from the scientific community that the Earth’s average temperature is warming, and that human activity is the main force contributing to this trend? What role do you see for the State Department in mitigating the dangers of climate change?
2. The Paris Agreement is a landmark multilateral agreement to coordinate and limit greenhouse gas emissions. While it has been criticized for not creating any binding emissions reduction requirements, it is the first climate change treaty to be signed on to by every country in the world and as such is critical to coordinating the international response to climate change. You said that the Obama administration was “[bowing] down to radical environmentalists” by showing leadership in the negotiations leading up to the Paris Agreement. Do you agree with President Trump’s stated intention to withdraw the United States from the Paris Agreement? What role do you see for the United States in multilateral environmental treaty negotiations?

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/with-mike-pompeo-at-the-state-department-are-the-uber-hawks-winning>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4456999/mike-pompeo-washington-journal>