



November 20, 2019

H.E. Benjamin Netanyahu
The Prime Minister's Office
Jerusalem

Dear Mr. Prime Minister;

The hundreds of Commanders for Israel's Security (CIS) members, all reserve and retired senior officers of the IDF, Mossad, Shin Bet and police, wish to alert you to the risks associated with a hasty annexation move, as suggested by proposed legislation and statements of cabinet members and MKs, which seem to have accelerated in the wake of US Secretary of State Pompeo's recent statement.

We do not question the good intentions of the US Administration, but are troubled with the interpretation as though it's statement removed the last hurdle to the annexation of West Bank territory.

In our view, it is not the US position, but Israel's security needs, that mandate serious consideration before a hasty and dangerous step is taken.

Though we fully endorse the need for Israel to insist in any future negotiations on annexing certain West Bank areas, we wish to point out that what is proper, legitimate and even essential as a demand in negotiations, might prove destructive when done unilaterally .

Having examined the security and other ramifications of unilateral annexation steps such as the ones under consideration, we feel duty bound to point out that any unilateral extension of Israeli sovereignty may trigger a chain reaction whose momentum and consequences neither you nor our government can control.

Suffice is to suggest just one example for that 'domino effect': the possibility that our national decision – whether by the Knesset or cabinet - to unilaterally apply sovereignty even over areas that are within the national consensus (i.e. Ma'ale Edumim, Gush Etzion, or the Jordan Valley), risks triggering a chain of explosive events during which security coordination with the Palestinian Authority (PA) is terminated.

Whether coordination termination stems from a Palestinian leadership decision or from peer pressure on those serving in the PA's security agencies, once they no longer perform their duty, a security vacuum will ensue. Israel will then face the choice of enabling Hamas and other terror groups to exploit it, or preempt it by instructing the IDF to re-deploy into all Palestinian population centers.

From that moment on, our government and the IDF will run the lives of millions of Palestinians, with no exit strategy.

To the best of our understanding, the cabinet is yet to be presented with an assessment of the full ramifications of such a move to our national security, economy and all other vital areas, which, our findings indicate, are mostly negative.

Moreover, we believe that in our democratic system, before the government or Knesset take a step which may prove destructive to Israel's security and future, it is essential to make certain that the public is aware of the consequences rather than presented with a fait accompli.

A senior CIS team stands by to present you, your team and other relevant national agencies with the findings of our two-year study of the ramifications of a unilateral annexation.

We do not presume to determine policy. Nor do we claim exclusivity of relevant information, expertise and experience.

All we wish to be certain of is that a decision of such far-reaching consequences is not taken without a comprehensive assessment of ramifications and a public discussion of its findings.

With best regards.

Respectfully,



Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Amnon Reshef
Chairperson